This is a reproduction of a library book that was digitized by Google as part of an ongoing effort to preserve the information in books and make it universally accessible.

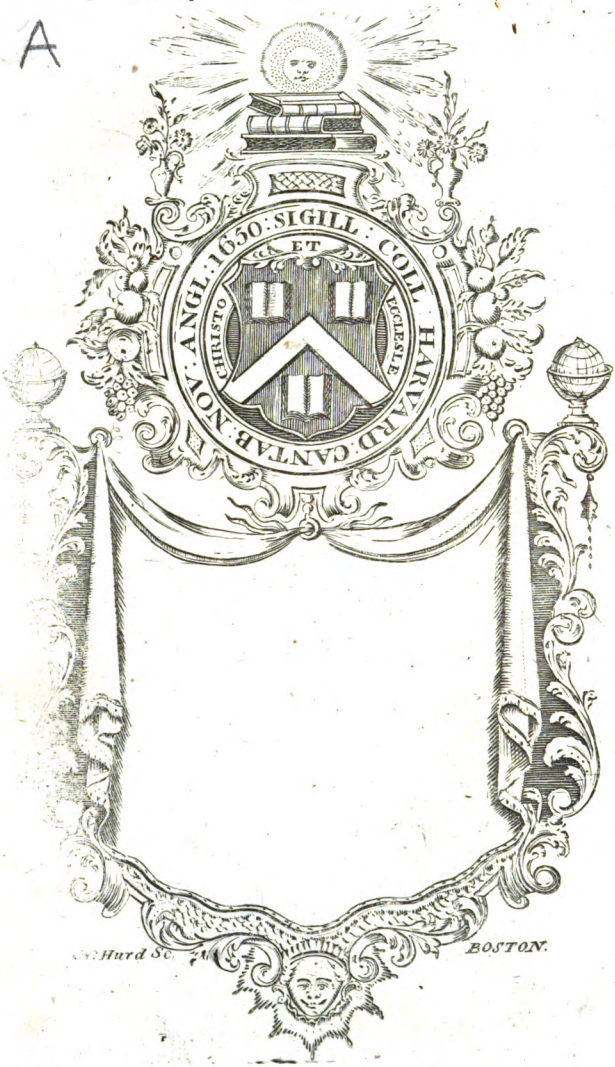
Google™ books

https://books.google.com

HD WIDENER
HW P2SB T

Digitized by Google

15.88
Fr 1424.10
A



Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE

LIFE

OF

NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE,

EMPEROR OF THE FRENCH.

WITH A

PRELIMINARY VIEW OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "WAVERLEY," &c.

IN NINE VOLUMES.

VOL. VIII.

SECOND EDITION.

EDINBURGH:

Printed by Ballantyne and Co.

FOR LONGMAN, REES, ORME, BROWN, & GREEN, LONDON;

AND

CADELL & CO., EDINBURGH.

1827.

Digitized by Google

5524.3
Fr 1424.10
A
HARVARD
COLLEGE
LIBRARY

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS.

VOLUME VIII.

CHAPTER I.

PAGE.

PREPARATIONS of Napoleon against the Invasion of France.—Terms of Peace offered by the Allies, through the Baron de St Aignan.—Bases of the Treaties—Congress held at Manheim.—Lord Castlereagh—Manifesto of the Allies.—Buonaparte's Reply—Its Insincerity.—State of Parties in France.—1. The Adherents of the Bourbons—their chief Partizans.—2. The old Republicans.—The Population of France, in general, wearied of the War, and desirous of the Deposition of Buonaparte.—His unsuccessful attempts to arouse the National Spirit.—Council of State Extraordinary, held on November 11th, when new Taxes are imposed, and a new Conscription of 360,000 men decreed.—Gloom of the Council, and violence of Buonaparte.—Report of the State of the Nation presented to Napoleon by the Legislative Body.—His indignation on receiving it.—The Legislative Body is prorogued.—Commissioners sent to the Departments to rouse the People—but in vain.—Unceasing activity of the Emperor.—National Guard called out.—Napoleon, presenting to them his Empress and Child, takes leave of the People.—He leaves Paris for the Armies on 25th January 1814, full of melancholy presages, 3

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER II.

Declaration of the Views of the Allies in entering France.—They enter Switzerland, and take possession of Geneva.—Prince Schwartzenberg crosses the Rhine.—Apathy of the French.—Junction of Blucher with the Grand Army.—Proceedings of the Crown Prince of Sweden.—Tardiness of the Allies.—Inferiority of Napoleon's numerical Force.—Battles of Brienne—and La Rothiere.—Difficulties of Buonaparte, during which he meditates to resign the Crown.—He makes a successful Attack on the Silesian Army at Champeaubert.—Blucher is compelled to retreat.—The Grand Army of the Allies carries Nugent and Montereau—attacked by Napoleon, and Schwartzenberg sends him a Letter of Remonstrance.—Montereau is taken by Storm.—Buonaparte's violence to his Generals.—The Austrians resolve on a general Retreat, as far as Nancy and Langres.—Their Motives.—Consequent Indignation and Excesses of the Austrian Troops.—Answer of Napoleon to the Letter of Prince Schwartzenberg.—Prince Wenceslaus sent to Buonaparte's Head-quarters, to treat for an Armistice.—The French bombard and enter Troyes on 23d February.—Execution of Goualt, a Royalist.—A Decree of Death is denounced against all wearing the Bourbon Emblems, and all Emigrants who should join the Allies.—Retrospect of Movements upon the Frontiers, ... 36

CHAPTER IV.*

Retrospect of Military Events on the French Frontiers.—Defection of Murat, who declares in favour of the Allies.—Its Consequences.—Augereau is compelled to abandon Gex and Franche Compté.—The North of Germany and Flanders lost to France.—Carnot intrusted with the command of Antwerp,—Bergen-op-Zoom nearly taken by Sir Thomas Graham, but lost by the disorder of the Troops in the moment of success.—The Allies take and evacuate Soissons.—Bulow and Winzengerode unite with Blucher.—The Duke of Wellington forces his way through the Pays des Gaves.—State of the Royalists in the West of France.—Discontent of the old Republicans with Napoleon's Government.—Views of the different Members of the Alliance as to the Dynasties of the Bourbons and

Digitized by Google

of Napoleon.—Proceedings of the Dukes of Berri and Angouleme, and Monsieur, the two latter of whom enter France.—The French defeated by Wellington at Orthez.—Bourdeaux is voluntarily surrendered to Marshal Beresford by the Inhabitants, who mount the White Cockade.—Details of the Negotiations of Chatillon.—Treaty of Chaumont, by which the Allies bind themselves of new to carry on the war with vigour.—Napoleon presents a singularly unreasonable Contre-projet at Chatillon.—Congress at Chatillon broken up, . . 75

CHAPTER V.

Difficulties of Buonaparte—He marches upon Blucher, who is in possession of Soissons—Attacks the place without success. Battle of Craonne, on 7th March, attended by no decisive result.—Blucher retreats on Laon.—Battle of Laon on the 9th.—Napoleon is compelled to withdraw on the 11th, with great loss—He attacks Rheims, which is evacuated by the Russians.—Defeat at Bar-sur-Aube of the French divisions under Oudinot and Gerard, who, with Macdonald, are forced to retreat upon the great road to Paris.—Schwartzenberg wishes to retreat behind the Aube—but, the Emperor Alexander and Lord Castlereagh opposing the measure, it is determined to proceed upon Paris.—Napoleon occupies Arcis.—Battle of Arcis on the 20th.—Napoleon is joined, in the night after the battle, by Macdonald, Oudinot, and Gerard.—Nevertheless, he retreats along both sides of the Aube, with little loss, . . 113

CHAPTER VI.

Plans of Buonaparte in his present difficulties considered.—Military and Political Questions regarding Paris.—Napoleon determines to pass to the rear of the Eastern Frontier, and crosses the Marne on 22d March.—Retrospect of Events in the vicinity of Lyons, &c.—The Allies advance upon Paris.—Defeats of the French in various quarters.—Marmont and Mortier, with their discouraged and broken Forces, retreat under the walls of Paris.—Paris, how far defensible.—Exertions of Joseph Buonaparte.—The Empress Maria Louisa, with the Civil Authorities of Government, leave the city.—Attack of Paris on the

Digitized by Google

30th, when the French are defeated on all sides.—A truce is applied for, and accorded.—Joseph Buonaparte flies, with all his attendants, ... 134

CHAPTER VII.

State of Parties in Paris.—Royalists—Revolutionists—Buonapartists.—Talleyrand—his Plans and Views.—Chateaubriand—influence of his Eloquence in favour of the Royalists.—Mission to the Allied Sovereigns from the Royalists.—Their Answer.—Efforts of the Buonapartists.—Feelings of the lowest Classes in Paris—of the middle Ranks.—Neutrality of the National Guard.—Growing strength and confidence of the Royalists.—They issue Proclamations, and White Cockades.—Crowds assemble at the Boulevards to witness the entrance of the Allies.—Mutability of the French Character.—The Allies are received with shouts of welcome.—Their army retires to Quarters, and the Cossacks bivouac in the Champs Elysées, 170

CHAPTER VIII.

Fears of the Parisians.—Proceedings of Napoleon.—He is informed of the dissolution of the Congress at Chatillon.—Operations of the French Cavalry in rear of the Allies.—Capture of the Austrian Baron Weissemberg.—The Emperor Francis is nearly surprised.—Napoleon hastens on to Paris, and reaches Troyes on the night of the 29th March.—Opinion of Macdonald as to the possibility of relieving Paris.—Napoleon leaves Troyes on the 30th, and meets Billiard, a few miles from Paris, in full retreat.—Conversation betwixt them.—He determines to proceed to Paris, but is at length dissuaded—and dispatches Caulaincourt to the Metropolis, to receive terms from the Allied Sovereigns.—He himself returns to Fontainbleau, 185

CHAPTER IX.

The Allied Sovereigns issue a Proclamation that they will not treat with Buonaparte.—A Provisional Government is named by the Conservative Senate, who also decree the forfeiture of Napoleon.—This decree is sanctioned by declarations from all

Digitized by Google

the Public Bodies in Paris.—The legality of these Proceedings discussed.—Feelings towards Napoleon, of the Lower Classes, and of the Military.—On 4th April, Buonaparte issues a Document, abdicating the throne of France.—His subsequent agitation, and wish to continue the war.—The deed is finally dispatched, ... 197

CHAPTER X.

Victor, and others of the French Mareschals, give in their adhesion to the Provisional Government.—Marmont enters into a separate Convention; but assists at the Conferences held at Paris, leaving Souham second in command of his Army.—The Commanders have an interview with the Emperor Alexander.—Souham enters, with his Army, into the lines of the Allies; in consequence, the Allied Sovereigns insist upon the unconditional submission of Napoleon.—His behaviour on learning this result—and reluctant acquiescence.—The terms granted to him—Considerations as to their policy.—Disapprobation of Lord Castlereagh.—General desertion of Napoleon.—The Empress Maria Louisa returns to her Father's Protection.—Death of Josephine.—Singular Statement made by Baron Fain, Napoleon's Secretary, of the Emperor's attempt to commit Suicide.—After this he becomes more resigned.—His Views respecting the best Policy of the Bourbons, as his successors.—Leaves Fontainbleau, on his journey to Elba, on 28th April, 222

CHAPTER XI.

Commissioners appointed to escort Napoleon.—He leaves Fontainbleau on the 20th April.—His interview with Augereau at Valence.—Expressions of popular dislike towards Napoleon in the South of France.—Fears for his personal safety.—His own alarm, agitation, and precautions.—He arrives at Frejus—and embarks on board the Undaunted, with the British and Austrian Commissioners.—Arrives at Elba on 4th May—and lands at Porto Ferrajo, ... 249

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XII.

Elba—Napoleon's mode of life and occupations there—Effects produced by his residence at Elba upon the adjoining Kingdom of Italy.—He is visited by his Mother and the Princess Pauline —and by a Polish Lady.—Sir Niel Campbell the only Commissioner left at Elba.—Napoleon's Conversations on the State of Europe.—His pecuniary Difficulties—and fears of Assassination.—His impatience under these causes of complaint.—Motley nature of his Court.—He withdraws himself within Court-forms from intercourse with Sir Niel Campbell.—Symptoms of some approaching Crisis.—A part of the Old Guard disbanded, who return to France.—Napoleon escapes from Elba.—Fruitless pursuit by Sir Niel Campbell, ... 262

CHAPTER XIII.

Retrospect.—Restoration of the Bourbons displeasing to the Soldiery, but satisfactory to the People.—Terms favourable to France granted by the Allies.—Discontents about the manner of conceding the Charter.—Other grounds of dissatisfaction.—Apprehensions lest the Church and Crown Lands should be resumed.—Resuscitation of the Jacobin faction.—Increased Dissatisfactions in the Army.—The Claims of the Emigrants mooted in the Chamber of Delegates.—Marshal Macdonald's Proposal.—Financial Difficulties.—Restrictions on the Press.—Reflections on this Subject, ... 290

CHAPTER XIV.

Carnot's Memorial on Public Affairs.—Fouché fails to obtain the favour of the King, and joins the Jacobins.—Various Projects of that Party; which finally joins the Buonapartists.—Active Intrigues commenced.—Congress of Vienna.—Murat, alarmed at its proceedings, opens an Intercourse with Napoleon.—Plans of the Conspirators.—Buonaparte's Escape from Elba.—He lands at Cannes, and advances through France.—Is joined, at Grenoble, by 3000 Troops.—Halts at Lyons, appoints a Ministry, and issues several Decrees.—Dismay of the Royal Government. —Intrigues of Fouché.—Treachery of Ney.—Revolt of the

Digitized by Google

Bourbon Army at Melun.—The King leaves Paris, and Buonaparte arrives there—His reception, ... 338

CHAPTER XV.

Various attempts to organize a defence for the Bourbons fail.—Buonaparte, again reinstated on the throne of France, is desirous of continuing the peace with the Allies—but no answer is returned to his Letters.—Treaty of Vienna.—Grievances alleged by Buonaparte in justification of the step he had taken.—Debates in the British House of Commons, on the renewal of War.—Murat occupies Rome with 50,000 men—his proclamation summoning all Italians to arms.—He advances against the Austrians—is repulsed at Occhio-Bello—defeated at Tolentino—flies to Naples, and thence, in disguise to France—where Napoleon refuses to receive him, ... 391

CHAPTER XVI.

Buonaparte's attempts to conciliate Britain.—Plot to carry off Maria Louisa fails.—State of feeling in France with regard to Buonaparte's return—the Army—the Jacobins—the Constitutionalists.—Fouché and Sieyes made Peers.—Freedom of the Press granted, and outraged.—Independent conduct of Lecompte, editor of Le Censeur.—Disaffections among the lower Orders.—Part of them attached to Buonaparte.—These assemble before the Tuileries, and applaud the Emperor.—Festival of the Federates.—New Constitution—It is received with dissatisfaction—Meeting of the Champ de Mai to ratify it.—Buonaparte's Address to the Chambers of Peers and Deputies.—The spirit of Jacobinism predominant in the latter, . . . 412

CHAPTER XVII.

Preparations to renew the War.—Positions of the Allied Forces, amounting in whole to One Million of Men.—Buonaparte's Force not more than 200,000.—Conscription not ventured upon.—National Guard—their reluctance to serve.—Many Provinces hostile to Napoleon's Cause.—Fouché's Report makes known the wide-spread Disaffection.—Insurrection in La Vendée quell-

Digitized by Google

ed.—Military Resources of France.—Napoleon's Plan of Campaign.—Paris placed in a complete state of defence.—The Frontier-Passes and Towns fortified also.—Generals who accept Command under Napoleon.—He announces his purpose to measure himself with Wellington, ... 440

CHAPTER XVIII.

Army of Wellington covers Brussels—that of Blucher concentrated on the Sambre and Meuse.—Napoleon reviews his Grand Army on 14th June.—Advances upon Charleroi.—His plan to separate the Armies of the two opposing Generals fails.—Interview of Wellington and Blucher at Bric.—British Army concentrated at Quatre Bras.—Napoleon's plan of attack.—Battle of Ligny, and defeat of Blucher on 16th June.—Action at Quatre Bras on the same day—the British retain possession of the Field.—Blucher eludes the French pursuit.—Napoleon joins Ney.—Retreat of the British upon Waterloo, where the Duke of Wellington resolves to make a stand.—Localities of that celebrated Field, ... 455

CHAPTER XIX.

Napoleon's expectation that the Alliance would be broken up in case of his defeating the English in Belgium.—The English army take up their ground on 17th June, and the French next morning.—Strength of the two armies.—Plans of their Generals.—THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO commenced on the forenoon of the 18th June.—French attack directed against the British Centre—shifted to their Right—Charges of the Cuirassiers—and their reception.—Advance of the Prussians.—Ney's Charge at the head of the Guards—His repulse—and Napoleon's orders for retreat.—The victorious Generals meet at La Belle Alliance.—Behaviour of Napoleon during the Engagement.—Blucher's pursuit of the French.—Loss of the British—of the French.—Napoleon's subsequent attempts to undervalue the military Skill of the Duke of Wellington answered.—His unjust Censures of Grouchy.—The notion that the British were on the point of losing the Battle when the Prussians came up shown to be erroneous, ... 476

Digitized by Google

THE

LIFE

OF

NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

LIFE

OF

NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE.

CHAPTER I.

Preparations of Napoleon against the Invasion of France.—Terms of Peace offered by the Allies, through the Baron de St Aignan.—Bases of the Treaty.—Congress held at Manheim.—Lord Castlereagh.—Manifesto of the Allies.—Buonaparte's Reply.—Its insincerity.—State of Parties in France.—1. *The Adherents of the Bourbons—their chief Partizans.*—2. *The old Republicans.—The population of France, in general, wearied of the War, and desirous of the Deposition of Buonaparte.—His unsuccessful attempts to arouse the national spirit.—Council of State Extraordinary held on November 11th, when new taxes are imposed, and a new Conscription of 300,000 men decreed.—Gloom of the Council, and violence of Buonaparte.—Report of the State of the Nation presented to Napoleon by the Legislative Body.—His indignation on receiving it.—The Legislative Body is prorogued.—Commissioners sent to the departments to rouse the people—but in vain.—Unceasing activity of the Emperor.—National Guard called out.—Napoleon, presentiug to them his Empress and Child, takes leave of the People.—He leaves Paris for the Armies on 25th January 1814, full of melancholy presages.*

WHILE these scenes were passing in the vicinity of France, the Emperor was using every effort to

Digitized by Google

bring forward, in defence of her territory, a force in some degree corresponding to the ideas which he desired men should entertain of the Great Nation. He distributed the seventy or eighty thousand men whom he had brought back with him, along the line of the Rhine, unmoved by the opinions of those who deemed them insufficient in number to defend so wide a stretch of frontier. Allowing the truth of their reasoning, he denied its efficacy in the present instance. Policy now demanded, he said, that there should be no voluntary abatement of the lofty pretensions to which France laid claim. The Austrians and Prussians still remembered the campaigns of the Revolution, and dreaded to encounter France once more in the character of an armed nation. This apprehension was to be kept up as long as possible, and almost at all risks. To concentrate his forces would be to acknowledge his weakness, to confess that he was devoid of means to supply the exhausted battalions; and, what might be still more imprudent, it was making the nation itself sensible of the same melancholy truth; so that, according to this reasoning, it was necessary to keep up appearances, however ill seconded by realities. The allied sovereigns, on the other hand, were gradually approaching to the right bank of the Rhine their immense masses, which, including the reserves, did not, perhaps, amount to less than half a million of men.

Digitized by Google

The scruples of the Emperor of Austria, joined to the respect entertained for the courage of the French, and the talents of their leader, by the coalition at large, influenced their councils at this period, and before resuming a train of hostilities which must involve some extreme conclusion, they resolved once more to offer terms of peace to the Emperor of France.

The agent selected on this occasion was the Baron de St Aignan, a French diplomatist of reputation, residing at one of the German courts, who, falling into the hands of the allies, was set at liberty, with a commission to assure the French Emperor of their willingness to enter into a treaty on equal terms. The English government also publicly announced their readiness to negociate for a peace, and that they would make considerable concessions to obtain so great a blessing. Napoleon, therefore, had another opportunity for negotiating, upon such terms as must indeed deprive him of the unjust supremacy among European councils which he had attempted to secure, but would have left him a high and honourable seat among the sovereigns of Europe. But the pertinacity of Napoleon's disposition qualified him ill for a negotiator, unless when he had the full power in his own hand to dictate the terms. His determined firmness of purpose, in many cases a great advantage, proved now the very reverse, as it prevented him from anticipating absolute necessity, by sacrificing, for the sake

Digitized by Google

of peace, something which it was actually in his power to give or retain. This tenacity was a peculiar feature of his character. He might, indeed, be brought to give up his claims to kingdoms and provinces which were already put beyond his power to recover; but when the question regarded the cession of anything which was still in his possession, the grasp of the lion itself could scarce be more unrelaxing. Hence, as his misfortunes accumulated, the negotiations between him and the allies came to resemble the bargain driven with the King of Rome, according to ancient history, for the books of the Sibyls. The price of peace, like that of these mysterious volumes, was raised against him upon every renewal of the conferences. This cannot surprise any one who considers, that in proportion to the number of defeats sustained and power diminished, the demands of the party gaining the advantage must naturally be heightened.

This will appear from a retrospect to former negotiations. Before the war with Russia, Napoleon might have made peace upon nearly his own terms, providing they had been accompanied with a disavowal of that species of superior authority, which, by the display of his armies on the frontiers of Poland, he seemed disposed to exercise over an independent and powerful empire. There was nothing left to be disputed between the two Emperors, excepting the point of equality, which it was impossi-

Digitized by Google

ble for Alexander to yield up, in justice to himself and to his subjects.

The Congress at Prague was of a different complexion. The fate of war, or rather the consequence of Napoleon's own rashness, had lost him an immense army, and had delivered from his predominant influence, both Prussia and Austria; and these powers, united in alliance with Russia and England, had a title to demand, as they had the means of enforcing, such a treaty as should secure Prussia from again descending into a state which may be compared to that of Helots or Gibeonites; and Austria from one less directly dependent, but by the continuance of which she was stripped of many fair provinces, and exposed along her frontier to suffer turmoil from all the wars which the too well-known ambition of the French empire might awaken in Germany. Yet even then the terms proposed by Prince Metternich stipulated only the liberation of Germany from French influence, with the restoration of the Illyrian provinces. The fate of Holland, and that of Spain, were remitted till a general peace, to which England should be a party. But Buonaparte, though Poland and Illyria might be considered as lost, and the line of the Elbe and Oder as indefensible against the assembled armies of the allies, refused to accept these terms, unless clogged with the condition that the Hans Towns should remain under French influence; and did not even transmit this qualified ac-

Digitized by Google

quiescence to a treaty, until the truce appointed for the purpose of the Congress had expired.

After gaining six battles, and after the allies had redeemed their pledge, that they would not hear of farther negotiation while there was a French soldier in Germany, except as a prisoner, or as belonging to the garrison of a blockaded fortress, it was natural that the demands of the confederated Sovereigns should rise; more especially as England, at whose expense the war had been in a great measure carried on, was become a party to the conferences, and her particular objects must now be attended to in their turn.

The terms, therefore, proposed to Napoleon, on which peace and the guarantee of his dynasty might be obtained, had risen in proportion to the success of his enemies.

The Earl of Aberdeen, well known for his literature and talents, attended, on the part of Great Britain, the negociations held with the Baron St. Aignan. The basis of the treaty proposed by the allies were, —That France, divesting herself of all the unnatural additions with which the conquests of Buonaparte had invested her, should return to her natural limits, the Rhine, the Alps, and the Pyrenees, which of course left her in possession of the rich provinces of Belgium. The independence of Italy, Germany, and Holland, were absolutely stipulated. Spain, whom the power of Great Britain, seconded by her own ef-

Digitized by Google

forts, had nearly freed of the French yoke, was to be in like manner restored to independence, under Ferdinand.

Such were the outlines of the terms proposed. But it is generally admitted, that if Buonaparte had shown a candid wish to close with them, the stipulations might have been modified, so as to be more agreeable to him than they sounded in the abstract. There were ministers in the cabinet of the Allied Sovereigns who advised an acquiescence in Eugene Beauharnois, of whom a very favourable opinion was entertained, being received as King of the upper part of Italy, while Murat retained the southern half of that peninsula. The same councillors would not have objected to holding Holland as sufficiently independent, if the conscientious Louis Buonaparte were placed at its head. As for Spain, its destinies were now beyond the influence of Napoleon, even in his own opinion, since he was himself treating with his captive at Valençay, for re-establishing him on the throne. A treaty, therefore, might possibly have been achieved by help of skilful management, which, while it affirmed the nominal independence of Italy and Holland, would have left Napoleon in actual possession of all the real influence which so powerful a mind could have exercised over a brother, a step-son, and a brother-in-law, all indebted to him for their rise to the rank they held. His power might have been thus consolidated in

Digitized by Google

the most formidable manner, and his empire placed in such security, that he could fear no aggression on any quarter, and had only to testify pacific intentions towards other nations, to ensure the perfect tranquillity of France, and of the world.

But it did not suit the high-soaring ambition of Napoleon to be contented with such a degree of power as was to be obtained by negotiation. His favourite phrase on such occasions, which indeed he had put into the mouth of Maria Louisa upon a recent occasion, was, that he could not occupy a throne, the glory of which was tarnished. This was a strange abuse of words; for if his glory was at all impaired, as in a military point of view it certainly was, the depreciation arose from his having lost many great battles, and could not be increased by his acquiescing in such concessions as his defeat rendered necessary. The loss of a battle necessarily infers, more or less, some censure on the conduct of a defeated general; but it can never dishonour a patriotic prince to make such sacrifices as may save his people from the scourge of a protracted and losing warfare. Yet let us do justice to the memory of a man so distinguished. If a merited confidence in the zeal and bravery of his troops, or in his own transcendent abilities as a general, could justify him in committing a great political error in neglecting the opportunity of securing peace on honourable terms, the events of the strangely varied campaign of 1814 show sufficiently the

Digitized by Google

ample ground there was for his entertaining such an assurance.

At this period, Maret, Duke of Bassano, invited the allies to hold a congress at Manheim, for considering the preliminaries of peace; and, on the part of Great Britain, Lord Castlereagh, a cabinet minister, was sent over to represent her on this important occasion. Faction, which in countries where free discussion is permitted, often attaches its censure to the best and worthiest of those to whose political opinions it is opposed, has calumniated this statesman during his life, and even after his death. This is one of the evils at the expense of which freedom is purchased; and it is purchased the more cheaply, that the hour of confutation fails not to come. Now, when his power can atttract no flattery, and excite no odium, impartial history must write on the tomb of Castlereagh, that his undaunted courage, manly steadiness, and deep political sagacity, had the principal share in infusing that spirit of continued exertion and unabated perseverance into the councils of the allies, which supported them through many intervals of doubt and indecision, and finally conducted them to the triumphant conclusion of the most eventful contest which Europe ever saw.

In the meanwhile, both parties proclaimed their anxiety for peace, well aware of the advantageous opinion, which the French public in particular could

Digitized by Google

not fail to entertain of that party, which seemed most disposed to afford the world the blessings of that state of rest and tranquillity, which was now universally sighed for.

A manifesto was published by the allied monarchs, in which they complain, unreasonably certainly, of the preparations which Buonaparte was making for recruiting his army, which augmentation of the means of resistance, whether Napoleon was to look to peace or war, was equally justifiable, when the frontiers of France were surrounded by the allied armies. The rest of this state paper was in a better, because a truer tone. It stated that victory had brought the allies to the Rhine, but they meant to make no farther use of their advantages than to propose to Napoleon a peace, founded on the independence of France, as well as upon that of every other country. "They desired," as this document stated, "that France should be great, powerful, and happy, because the power of France is one of the fundamental bases of the social system in Europe. They were willing to confirm to her an extent of territory, greater than she enjoyed under her ancient kings; but they desired, at the same time, that Europe should enjoy tranquillity. It was, in short, their object to arrange a pacification on such terms as might, by mutual guarantees, and a well-arranged balance of power, preserve Europe in future from

Digitized by Google

the numberless calamities, which, during twenty years, had distracted the world." This public declaration seemed intended to intimate that the war of the coalition was not as yet directed against the person of Napoleon, or his dynasty, but only against his system of arbitrary supremacy. The allies further declared, that they would not lay down their arms until the political state of Europe should be finally arranged on unalterable principles, and recognised by the sanctity of treaties.

The reply of Buonaparte is contained in a letter from Caulaincourt to Metternich, dated 2d December. It declared that Buonaparte acquiesced in the principle which should rest the proposed pacification on the absolute independence of the states of Europe, so that neither one nor another should in future arrogate sovereignty or supremacy in any form whatsoever, either upon land or sea. It was therefore declared, that his Majesty adhered to the general bases and abstracts communicated by Monsieur St Aignan. "They will involve," the letter added, "great sacrifices on the part of France, but his Majesty would make them without regret, if, by like sacrifices, England would give the means of arriving at a general peace, honourable for all concerned."

The slightest attention to this document shows that Napoleon, in his pretence of being desirous for peace on the terms held out in the proposals of the allies, was totally insincere. His answer was

Digitized by Google

artfully calculated to mix up with the diminution of his own exorbitant power, the question of the maritime law, on which England and all other nations had acted for many centuries, and which gives to those nations that possess powerful fleets, the same advantage which those that have great armies enjoy by the law martial. The rights arising out of this law maritime, had been maintained by England at the end of the disastrous American war, when the Armed Neutrality was formed for the express purpose of depriving her, in her hour of weakness, of this bulwark of her naval power. It had been defended during the present war against all Europe, with France and Napoleon at her head. It was impossible that Britain should permit any challenge of her maritime rights in the present moment of her prosperity, when not only her ships rode triumphant on every coast, but her own victorious army was quartered on French ground, and the powerful hosts of her allies, brought to the field by her means, were arrayed along the whole frontier of the Rhine. The Emperor of the French might have as well proposed to make the peace which Europe was offering to him, depend upon Great Britain's ceding Ireland or Scotland.

Neither can it be pretended that there was an indirect policy in introducing this discussion as an apple of discord, which might give cause to disunion among the allies. Far from looking on the

Digitized by Google

maritime law, as exercised by Britain, with the eyes of jealousy, with which it might at other times have been regarded, the continental nations remembered the far greater grievances which had been entailed on them by Buonaparte's memorable attempt to put down that law by his anti-commercial system, which had made Russia herself buckle on her armour, and was a cause, and a principal one, of the general coalition against France. As Buonaparte, therefore, could have no hope to obtain any advantage, direct or indirect, from mixing up the question of maritime rights with that of the general settlement of the continent, and as mere spleen and hatred to Great Britain would be scarce an adequate motive in a mind so sagacious, we must suppose this inadmissible stipulation to have been thrown in for the purpose of enabling him to break off the negotiation when he pleased, and cast upon the English the unpopularity attending the breach of it. It is very true, that England had offered to make sacrifices for obtaining a general peace; but these sacrifices, as was seen by the event, regarded the restoration to France of conquered colonies, not the cession of her own naval rights, which, on no occasion whatsoever, a minister of Britain will, can, or dare, permit to be brought into challenge. Accordingly, the acceptance by Buonaparte of the terms transmitted by St. Aignan being provided with a slip-knot, as it

Digitized by Google

were, by which he could free himself from the engagement at pleasure, was considered, both by the allies, and by a large proportion of the people of France, as elusory, and indicating no serious purpose of pacification. The treaty therefore languished, and was not fairly set on foot until the chance of war had been again appealed to.

In the meanwhile, the allies were bringing up their reserves as fast as possible, and Buonaparte on his side was doing all he could to recruit his forces. His measures for this purpose had been adopted long before the present emergency. As far back as the 9th October, the Empress Maria Louisa, in the character of Regent, presided in a meeting of the Senate, held for the purpose of calling for fresh recruits to the armies. She was an object of interest and compassion to all, when announcing the war which had broken out betwixt her father and her husband; but the following injudicious censure upon her country was put into the mouth of the young sovereign, without much regard to delicacy. "No one," she said, "can know so well as I what the French will have to dread, if they permit the allies to be conquerors." The closing paragraph was also much criticised, as attaching more importance to the personal feelings of the sovereign, than ought to have been exclusively ascribed to them in so great a public extremity. "Having been acquainted for four years

Digitized by Google

with the inmost thoughts of my husband, I know with what sentiments he would be afflicted if placed on a tarnished throne, and wearing a crown despoiled of glory." The decree of the Senate, passive as usual, appointed a levy of two hundred and eighty thousand conscripts.

When Buonaparte arrived at Saint Cloud, after having brought the remains of his once great army to Mayence, his affairs were even in a worse state than had been anticipated. But before we proceed to detail the measures which he took for redeeming them, it is necessary to take notice of two parties in the state, who, in consequence of the decay of the Imperial power, were growing gradually into importance.

The first were the adherents of the Bourbons, who, reduced to silence by the long-continued successes of Buonaparte, still continued to exist, and now resumed their consequence. They had numerous partizans in the west and south of France, and many of them still maintained correspondence with the exiled family. The old noblesse, amongst whom such as did not attach themselves to the court and person of Napoleon, continued to be staunch royalists, had acquired, or rather regained, a considerable influence in Parisian society. The superior elegance of their manners, the seclusion, and almost mystery of their meetings, their courage and their misfortunes, gave an interest to these relics

Digitized by Google

of the history of France, which was encreased by the historical remembrances connected with ancient names and high descent. Buonaparte himself, by the restoration of nobility as a rank, gave a dignity to those who had possessed it for centuries, which his own new creations could not impart. It is true, that in the eye of philosophy, the great man who first merits and wins a distinguished title, is in himself infinitely more valuable and respectable than the obscure individual who inherits his honours at the distance of centuries; but then he is valued for his personal qualities, not for his noblesse. No one thought of paying those mareschals, whose names and actions shook the world, a greater degree of respect when Napoleon gave them titles. On the contrary, they will live in history, and be familiar to the imagination, by their own names, rather than those arising from their peerages. But the science of heraldry, when admitted as an arbitrary rule of society, reverses the rule of philosophy, and ranks nobility, like medals, not according to the intrinsic value of the metal, but in proportion to its antiquity. If this was the case with even the heroes who had hewed a soldier's path to honours, it was still more so with the titles granted by Buonaparte, "upon carpet consideration," and the knights whom he dubbed with unhacked rapier. It might be truly said of these, that

Their fire-new stamp of honour scarce was current.

Digitized by Google

When, therefore, the republican fury died away, and Buonaparte directed the respect of the people at large towards title and nobility, a distinct and superior influence was acquired by those who possessed such honours by hereditary descent. Napoleon knew this, and courted, and in some degree feared, the remainder of the old noblesse, who, unless he could decidedly attach them to his own interest, were exposed to surveillance and imprisonment on circumstances of slight suspicion. They became, however, so circumspect and cautious, that it was impossible to introduce the spies of the police into their *salons* and private parties. Still Napoleon was sensible of the existence of this party, and of the danger which might attend upon it, even while his followers had forgot perhaps that the Bourbons continued to live. "I thought him mad," said Ney, (whose head, according to Fouché, could not embrace two political ideas,) "when taking leave of the army at Smorgony, he used the expression, 'The Bourbons will make their own of this.'"*

This party began now to be active, and a royalist confederation organized itself in the centre of France as early as the month of March 1813. The most distinguished members are said to have been the Dukes of Duras, Tremouille, and Fitzjames; Messrs de Po-

* *Les Bourbons s'en tireraient.* Memoirs of Fouché, vol. I. p. 87.

Digitized by Google

lignac, Ferrand, Audrien de Montmorency, Sosthene de la Rochefoucault, Sermaison, and La Rochejacquelein. Royalist commanders had been nominated in different quarters—Count Suzannet in the Lower Poitou, Duras in Orleans and Tours, and the Marquis de Riviere in the province of Berry. Bourdeaux was full of Royalists, most of them of the mercantile class, who were ruined by the restrictions of the Continental System, and all waited anxiously a signal for action.

Another internal faction, noways desirous of the return of the Bourbons, yet equally inimical to the power of Napoleon, consisted of the old Republican statesmen and leaders, with the more zealous part of their followers. These could not behold with indifference the whole fruits of the Revolution, for which so much misery had been endured, so much blood spilled, so many crimes committed, swept away by the rude hand of a despotic soldier. They saw, with a mixture of shame and mortification, that the issue of all their toils and all their systems had been the monstrous concoction of a military despotism, compared with which every other government in Europe might be declared liberal, except perhaps that of Turkey. During the monarchy, so long represented as a system of slavery, public opinion had in the parliaments zealous advocates, and an opportunity of making itself known; but in Imperial France all was mute, except the voice of

Digitized by Google

hired functionaries, mere trumpets of the government, who breathed not a sound but what was suggested to them. A sense of this degraded condition united in secret all those who desired to see a free government in France, and especially such as had been active in the commencement of the Revolution.

This class of politicians could not desire the return of the family in whose exile they had been active, and had therefore cause to fear the re-action with which such an event might be attended; but they wished to get rid of Napoleon, whose government seemed to be alike inconsistent with peace and with liberty. The idea of a regency suggested itself to Fouché and others, as a plausible mode of attaining their purpose. Austria, they thought, might be propitiated by giving Maria Louisa the precedence in the council of regency as guardian of her son, who should succeed to the crown when he came to the age of majority. This expedient, it was thought, would give an opportunity, in the meanwhile, to introduce free principles into the constitution. But, while it does not appear how these theorists intended to dispose of Napoleon, it is certain that nothing but his death, captivity, or perpetual exile, would have prevented such a man from obtaining the full management of a regency, in which his wife was to preside in the name of his son.

A great part of the population of France, without

Digitized by Google

having any distinct views as to its future government, were discontented with that of Buonaparte, which, after having drained the country of men and wealth, seemed about to terminate, by subjecting it to the revenge of incensed Europe. When these were told that Buonaparte could not bear to sit upon a tarnished throne, or wear a crown of which the glory was diminished, they were apt to consider how often it was necessary that the best blood of France should be expended in washing the one and restoring the brilliancy of the other. They saw in Napoleon a bold and obstinate man, conscious of having overcome so many obstacles, that he could not endure to admit the existence of any which might be insurmountable. They beheld him obstinately determined to retain everything, defend everything, venture everything, without making the least sacrifice to circumstances, as if he were in his own person independent of the Laws of Destiny, to which the whole universe is subjected. These men felt the oppression of the new taxes, the terrors of the new Conscription,* and without forming a wish as to the mode

* It has been given as a sufficient answer to these complaints, that Buonaparte is falsely accused of having drained France of her youth, since, upon the whole, the population is stated to have, on the contrary, increased. This may be the case; but it is no less certain that the wars of Buonaparte consumed at least a million of conscripts, and it does not occur to us that the population of a coun-

Digitized by Google

in which he was to be succeeded, devoutly desired the Emperor's deposition. But when an end is warmly desired, the means of attaining it soon come to occupy the imagination; and thus many of those who were at first a sort of general malcontents, came to attach themselves to the more decided faction either of the royalists or liberalists.

These feelings, varying between absolute hostility to Napoleon, and indifference to his fate, threw a general chillness over the disposition to resist the invasion of the strangers, which Buonaparte had reckoned on as certain to render the war national amongst so high-spirited a people as the French. No effort was spared to dispel this apathy, and excite them to resistance; the presses of the capital and the provinces, all adopted the tone suggested by the government, and called forth every one to rise in mass, for defence of the country. But although, in some places, the peasants were induced to take arms, the nation at large showed a coldness, which can only be accounted for by the general idea which prevailed, that the

---

try increases under such circumstances, like the growth of a tree subjected to much pruning; still less that the general result would satisfy parents for the slaughter of their children, any more than the sorrow of a mother who had lost her infant would be assuaged by the information that her next-door neighbour had been safely delivered of twins.

Digitized by Google

Emperor had an honourable peace within his power, whenever he should be disposed to accept of it.

In the meantime, new burdens were necessary to pay the expenses of the approaching campaign, and recruit the diminished ranks of the army. Napoleon, indeed, supplied from his own hoards a sum of thirty millions of francs; but, at the same time, the public taxes of the subject were increased by one moiety, without any appeal to, or consultation with, the Legislative Body, who, indeed, were not sitting at the time. In a Council of State extraordinary, held on the 11th November, two days after his return to Paris, Napoleon vindicated the infliction of this heavy augmentation on a discontented and distressed country. "In ordinary times," he said, "the contributions were calculated at one-fifth of the income of the individual; but, according to the urgency of events, there was no reason why it should not rise to a fourth, a third, or a half of the whole income. In fact," he concluded, "the contribution had no bounds; and if there were any laws intimating the contrary, they were ill-considered laws, and undeserving of attention."

There was then read to the Council a decree of the Senate for a new conscription of three hundred thousand men, to be levied upon those who had escaped the conscription of former years, and who had been considered as exempted from the service. There

Digitized by Google

was a deep and melancholy silence. At length a councillor spoke, with some hesitation, though it was only to blame the introductory clause of the senatorial decree, which stated the invasion of the frontiers as the cause of this large levy. It was, he suggested, a declaration too much calculated to spread alarm.

"And wherefore," said Napoleon, giving way to his natural vehemence, and indicating more strongly than prudence warranted, the warlike and vindictive purposes which exclusively occupied his breast,—"wherefore should not the whole truth be told? Wellington has entered the south; the Russians menace the northern frontier; the Prussians, Austrians, and Bavarians threaten the east. Shame!—Wellington is in France, and we have not risen in mass to drive him back. All my allies have deserted me; the Bavarians have betrayed me—They threw themselves on my rear to cut off my retreat—But they have been slaughtered for their pains. No peace—none till we have burned Munich. A triumvirate is formed in the north, the same which made a partition of Poland. I demand of France three hundred thousand men—I will form a camp of a hundred thousand at Bourdeaux—another at Metz—another at Lyons. With the present levy, and what remains of the last, I will have a million of men. But I must have grown men—not these boy-conscripts, to

Digitized by Google

encumber the hospitals, and die of fatigue upon the highways—I can reckon on no soldiers now save those of France itself."

"Ah, Sire," said one of the assentators, glad to throw in a suggestion which he supposed would suit the mood of the time, "that ancient France must remain to us inviolate."

"And Holland!" answered Napoleon, fiercely. "Abandon Holland? sooner yield it back to the sea. Councillors, there must be an impulse given—all must march—You are fathers of families, the heads of the nation; it is for you so set the example. They speak of peace; I hear of nothing but peace, when all around should echo to the cry of war."

This was one of the occasions on which Buonaparte's constitutional vehemence overcame his political prudence. We might almost think we hear the voice of the Scandinavian deity Thor, or the war-god of Mexico, clamorous for his victims, and demanding that they be unblemished, and worthy of his bloody altar. But Buonaparte was unable to inspire others with his own martial zeal; they only foresaw that the nation must, according to the system of its ruler, encounter a most perilous danger, and that, even in case of success, when Napoleon reaped laurels, France would only gather cypress. This feeling was chiefly predominant in the Legis-

Digitized by Google

lative Assembly; as every representative body, which emanates however remotely from the people, has a natural aptitude to espouse their cause.

It is true, that the Emperor had by every precaution in his power, endeavoured to deprive this part of the state, the only one which had retained the least shadow of popular representation, of everything approaching to freedom of debate or right of remonstrance, and by a recent act of despotic innovation, had even robbed them of the power of choosing their own president. He is said also to have exerted his authority over individuals by a practice similar to that practised by James the Second upon members of parliament, called *closeting*, admitting individuals of the Legislative Body to private interviews, and condescending to use toward them that personal intercession, which coming from a sovereign, it is so difficult to resist. But these arts proved unsuccessful, and only tended to show to the world that the Legislative Body had independence enough to intimate their desire for peace, while their sovereign was still determined on war. A commission of five of their members, distinguished for wisdom and moderation, were appointed to draw up a report upon the state of the nation, which they did in terms respectful to Napoleon, but such as plainly indicated their conviction that he would act wisely to discontinue his schemes of external ambition, to purchase peace

Digitized by Google

by disclaiming them, and at the same time to restore to the subject some degree of internal liberty. They suggested, that, in order to silence the complaints of the allied monarchs, which accused France of aiming at general sovereignty, the emperor should make a solemn and specific declaration, abjuring all such purposes. They reminded him, that when Louis XIV. desired to restore energy to the nation, he acquainted them with the efforts he had made to obtian peace, and the effect answered his wishes. They recommended the example to Napoleon. It was only necessary they said, that the nation should be assured, that the war was to be continued for the sole object of the independence of the French people and territory, to reanimate public spirit, and induce all to concur in the general defence. After other arguments, tending to enforce the same advice, the report concluded with recommending that his Majesty should be supplicated to maintain the active and constant execution of the laws, which preserve to Frenchmen the rights of liberty, and security both of person and property, and to the nation the free exercise of its political privileges.

Like the mute prince, who recovered his speech when his father's life was endangered, the extremity of the national distress thus gave the power of remonstrance to a public body, which had hitherto been only the passive agents of the will of a despotic sovereign. Yet comparing the nature of the re-

Digitized by Google

monstrance with the period of extremity at which it was made, Napoleon must have felt somewhat in the situation of the patriarch of Uz, the friends of whose former prosperity came in the moment of his greatest distresses with reproaches instead of assistance. The Legislative Body had been at least silent and acquiescent during the wonderful period of Buonaparte's success, and they now chose that of his adversity to give him unpalatable advice, instead of aiding in this emergency to inspire the nation with confidence. A philosophical monarch would nevertheless have regarded the quality of the course recommended more than the irritating circumstances of time and manner in which it was given; and would have endeavoured, by frank confidence and concessions, to reconcile himself with the Legislative Body. An artful and Machiavelian depost would have temporised with the deputies, and yielded for the time, with the purpose of afterwards recovering, at a fitting period, whatever point he might at present be obliged to cede. But Napoleon, too impetuous for either policy or philosophy, gave way to the full vehemence of a resentment, which, though unreasonable and imprudent, was certainly, considering those to whom it was addressed, by no means unnatural. He determined instantly to prorogue the Assembly, which had indicated such symptoms of opposition. Their hall was, therefore, shut against

Digitized by Google

them, and guarded with soldiers, while the deputies, summoned before the throne of the Emperor, received the following singular admonition:—"I have prohibited the printing of your address, because it is seditious. Eleven parts of you are good citizens, but the twelfth consists of rebels, and your commissioners are of the number. Lainé corresponds with the Prince Regent of England; the others are hot-headed fools, desirous of anarchy, like the Girondins, whom such opinions led to the scaffold. Is it when the enemy are on the frontiers that you demand an alteration of the constitution? Rather follow the example of Alsace and Franche Compté, where the inhabitants ask for leaders and arms to drive the invaders back. You are not the representatives of the people—you are only the representatives of the individual departments .... Yet you seek in your address to draw a distinction betwixt the sovereign and the people. I—I am the only real representative of the people. Which of you could support such a burden?—The throne is merely a piece of wood covered with velvet. I—I alone hold the place of the people. If France desires another species of constitution, which does not suit me, I will tell her to seek another monarch. It is at me the enemies aim, more than at France; but are we, therefore, to sacrifice a part of France? Do I not sacrifice my self-love, and my feelings of superiority,

Digitized by Google

to obtain peace? Think you I speak proudly? If I do, I am proud because I have courage, and because France owes her grandeur to me. Yes—your address is unworthy of the Legislative Body, and of me. Begone to your homes. I will cause your address to be published in the Moniteur, with such notes as I shall furnish. Even if I had done wrong, you ought not to have reproached me with it thus publicly. People do not wash their dirty linen before the world. To conclude, France has more need of me than I have of France."

With this phillipic, which we have but slightly compressed, he spurned the members of the Legislative Body from his presence. It displays in a remarkable degree his natural vehemence of temper; his view of the constitution as a drama, in which he filled up every part, and performed at once the part of the prince and of the people; his consciousness of his own extraordinary powers, which he boldly weighed in the balance against all France; and the coarse and mean taste of some of his expressions. The suspension of the Legislative Body, the only part, we repeat, of the Imperial constitution which had the least pretence to a popular origin, was not qualified to increase the confidence of the public, who now saw want of unity between the Emperor and the popular representatives, added to the other threatening circumstances of the time, and became yet more

Digitized by Google

distracted in their opinions, and unwilling to exert themselves for the common defence.

To give a more favourable impulse to the mind of the nation, Napoleon had recourse to an expedient, which, in the time of the Republic, had been attended with universal effect. He sent special commissioners, twenty-seven in number, into the different departments, to arouse the dormant energies of the inhabitants, and induce them to take up arms. But the senators and councillors, chosen for this purpose, were altogether void of the terrible energies of the Republican proconsuls; and, though endowed like them with the most arbitrary powers, they had neither the furious zeal, nor the contempt of all the prejudices of humanity, which had been displayed by those ferocious demagogues. Their mission, therefore, produced but little effect. The conscription, too, failed to be the ready source of levies which it had so often proved. The lancet had been so often used, that the blood no longer followed it so readily.

The unceasing activity of Napoleon laboured to supply these deficiencies. By day he was incessantly engaged in actively reviewing troops, inspecting stores, and all the preparations for a desperate resistance. By night, the lights were seen to glimmer late and long in the windows of his private apartment, in the upper story of the Tuilleries. He succeeded in levying twelve fresh regiments, and

Digitized by Google

prepared to augment his veteran force by withdrawing Suchet from Catalonia, and making draughts from Soult's army on the frontiers, which he designed to supply by fresh levies.

The Moniteur, and the other newspapers, magnified the success of the Emperor's exertions, described armies in reserve which had no existence, and dilated upon the *beau desespoir* which was driving all France to arms, while, in fact, most of the provinces waited with apathy the events of the war.

One of the strongest symptoms of Napoleon's own consciousness of approaching danger, was his calling out and arming the National Guard of Paris, a force to which he would not have appealed, save in the case of the last necessity, but to which he now felt himself obliged to have recourse. Aware, however, that to mark any want of confidence in the armed citizens at this moment, would be to give occasion to the disaffection which he dreaded, he solemnised his departure to the frontier by convoking a meeting of the officers of the National Guard at the Tuileries. He appeared among them with his Empress and his infant child, and in a tone which penetrated every bosom, announced that, being about to place himself at the head of his army, he committed to the faith of the citizens of Paris, the security of his capital, his wife, and his child. Whatever complaints might be justly entertained against Na-

Digitized by Google

poleon's political conduct, none were so ungenerous as to remember them at that moment. Many of the officers shared in the emotion which he testified, and some mingled their tears with those of the alarmed and sorrowing Empress.

This scene took place on the 23d of January; on the 25th Napoleon left that abode of royalty, to which he was doomed not to return until he had undergone strange changes of fortune. His mind was agitated with unusual apprehensions and anticipations of misfortune; feeling also, what was unsuspected by many, that the real danger of his situation arose from the probability of the nation's wishing to recall the Bourbons. He had even, according to his own account, resolved to arrest "the person of a man of great influence,"* whom he supposed most likely to promote this design. His councillors persuaded him to forbear this arbitrary action at a moment when his power was becoming daily more obnoxious, and reminded him that the suspected person had as much reason to fear the restoration of the Bourbons as he himself had. The Emperor yielded the point, but not without strongly repeating his fears that his advisers and himself would both have to repent of it; and not without

* Talleyrand is intimated; for Fouché, to whom the description might otherwise have applied, was not at this time in or near Paris.

Digitized by Google

charging Cambaceres to make sure of that individual's person, in case any crisis should take place in the capital.

Thus, full of melancholy presages, he hastened to the field, where he had but inadequate means to oppose to the accumulated force which was now precipitating itself upon France.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER II.

Declaration of the Views of the Allies in entering France.—They enter Switzerland, and take possession of Geneva.—Prince Schwartzenberg crosses the Rhine.—Apathy of the French.—Junction of Blucher with the Grand Army.—Proceedings of the Crown Prince of Sweden.—Tardiness of the Allies.—Inferiority of Napoleon's numerical Force.—Battles of Brienne—and La Rothiere.—Difficulties of Buonaparte, during which he meditates to resign the Crown.—He makes a successful Attack on the Silesian Army at Champeaubert.—Blucher is compelled to retreat.—The Grand Army of the Allies carries Nogent and Montereau—attacked by Napoleon, and Schwartzenberg sends him a Letter of Remonstrance.—Montereau is taken by Storm.—Buonaparte's violence to his Generals.—The Austrians resolve on a general Retreat, as far as Nancy and Langres.—Their motives.—Consequent indignation and excesses of the Austrian Troops.—Answer of Napoleon to the Letter of Prince Schwartzenberg.—Prince Wenceslaus sent to Buonaparte's head-quarters, to treat for an Armistice.—The French bombard and enter Troyes on 23d February.—Execution of Goualt, a Royalist.—A Decree of Death is denounced against all wearing the Bourbon emblems, and all Emigrants who should join the Allies.—Retrospect of Movements upon the Frontiers.

It was time that Buonaparte should appear in the field in person, for the eastern frontiers of his empire, assaulted on every point, were yielding an almost unresisted entrance to the invading armies.

Digitized by Google

The Allied Sovereigns had commenced their operations upon a system, as moderate and prudent in a political point of view, as it was bold and decisive considered under a military aspect.

They had not been too much elated by the successes of the late campaign. These had been bought at a high price, and events had shown, that if Napoleon could be resisted and defeated, it could only be by outnumbering his veteran armies, and accumulating such force against him as even his skill and talents should find irresistible. They recollected, also, the desperate efforts of which France and Frenchmen were capable, and were prudently desirous to express the moderation of their purpose in such a form as should have no chance of being mistaken.

Their manifestos disclaimed the intention of dictating to France any particular form of government. They only desired that she should remain within the limits of her ancient territory, a peaceful member of the European commonwealth, allowing to other states, as well as claiming for herself, the full immunities of freedom and independence. The Allied Sovereigns desired that there should be an end put to the system which decided the fate of kingdoms, not according to the better right, but the longest sword. They wished a total suppression of all domination of the powerful over the weak; of all pretext of usurpation founded on alleged natural boundaries, or, in other words, on the claim of a powerful state to rend from

Digitized by Google

a weak one whatever suited its convenience to possess. In a word, they aimed at the restoration of the Balance of Power, which had been long the political object of the wisest statesmen in Europe. It is singular, that the three nations who were now united to oppose the aggressions of Buonaparte, had themselves been the first to set the example of violent and unprincipled spoliation in the partition of Poland; and that they had reaped an abundant punishment in the measure of retribution dealt to them by the instrumentality of the very man, whose lawless outrages they, in their turn, were now combined to chastise.

With respect to the nature of the changes which might take place in the internal arrangements of France, in order to bring about the restoration of the balance of power, the allied monarchs professed themselves indifferent. If Napoleon should reconcile himself to the general pacification they proposed, they did not pretend any right to state objections to his remaining in authority. It was the military system of usurpation, not the person of Buonaparte, against which they made war. If, on the other hand, France could not return to a state of peace without a change of her ruler, it was for France herself to consider what that change should be. The Allied Sovereigns were determined she should no longer work her uncontrolled will upon other states; but they left her at full liberty to adopt what government, and what sovereign she pleased, within her own territories.

Digitized by Google

At the same time having limited the purpose of their armament to such a just and moderate object, the allies resolved to put such activity in their measures as to satisfy the French that they had the power of enforcing their demands; and for that purpose they determined to enter the frontier. From Basle to Mentz, from Mentz to the mouth of the Waal, the frontier of France and Belgium is defended by the Rhine, a strong natural boundary in itself, and covered by a triple row of an hundred and forty fortresses, some of them of the very first class. Above Basle, where the Rhine divides France from Switzerland, the frontier is more accessible. But then this upper line could not be acted upon without violating the neutrality which Switzerland had asserted, which Buonaparte had admitted as affording protection for the weakest part of the threatened frontier, and which, upon their own principle of respecting the rights of neutrals, the allies were under a sort of necessity of acknowledging. Nevertheless, the extreme facility of entering France on this side, led Austria and Prussia to form the wish to set aside scruples, and disregard the neutrality of Switzerland.

These two powers remembered how little respect Napoleon had shown to neutral rights in the campaign of Ulm, when he marched without hesitation through the Prussian territories of Anspach and Bareuth, in order to accomplish the demolition of the Austrian army; nor did they fail to quote his

Digitized by Google

forcible interference in the affairs of the Cantons of Switzerland, at an earlier period of his history. Russia did not for some time acquiesce in this reasoning; but when some plausible grounds were alleged of breach of neutrality on the part of the Swiss, the scruples of Alexander were removed; and it was resolved that the Austrian Grand Army should traverse the Swiss territory for the purpose of entering France. They halted before Geneva, and took possession of the town, or rather it was yielded to them by the citizens.

The Canton of Bern, also, which resented some alterations made by Napoleon to the prejudice of their feudal claims upon the Pays de Vaud, received the Austrians not as intruders but as friends. Buonaparte, in his manifestoes, insisted vehemently upon the injustice of this aggression upon the territories of the Swiss. Undoubtedly the transaction was of a questionable character; but it was inconsistent in Napoleon to declaim against it, since, in the case of the arrest of the Duke d'Enghien, he had laid it down as national law, that the violation of the territory of Baden was an offence pleadable by no other than the sovereign of that territory. On his own doctrine, therefore, it was incompetent in any other nation to resent, on behalf of the Swiss, that which the Swiss did not resent for themselves.

Upon the 21st December, Mareschal Prince Schwartzenberg crossed the Rhine with the Austrian army at four points, and advanced upon Langres,

Digitized by Google

as had been previously agreed. Moving with the extreme slowness and precision which characterise Austrian manœuvres, paying always the same respect to fortresses without garrisons, and passes without guards, as if they had been in a posture of defence, the Austrians, instead of reaching Langres on 27th December, did not arrive till the 17th January 1814. A serious intention had been for some time manifested to defend the place, and it was even garrisoned by a detachment of Buonaparte's Old Guard. The approach of the numerous Austrian reinforcements, however, rendered the preparations for defence of the town unavailing, and Langres was evacuated by all the French troops, saving about three hundred men, who surrendered to General Giulay on the 17th. A division of the Austrians was immediately advanced to Dijon.

The apathy of the French at this period, may be estimated from the following circumstance:—Dijon, summoned by a flying party of cavalry, returned for answer, that a town containing thirty thousand inhabitants, could not with honour surrender to fifteen hussars, but that if a respectable force appeared before its walls, they were ready to give up the keys of their city. This reasonable request was complied with, and Dijon surrendered on 19th January.

The city of Lyons, the second in the empire, had itself nearly fallen into the hands of the Aus-

Digitized by Google

trians; but the inhabitants showed a disposition to defend the town, and being reinforced with troops sent to secure a place of such importance, the Austrian general Bubna retired from under its walls. It is allowed, that more activity on the part of the allies might have saved this repulse, which was of considerable importance. It was the only one which they had yet sustained.

While the Grand Army, under Schwartzenberg, was thus advancing into France, the army of Silesia, which was the name given to that commanded by the veteran Blucher, consisting, as formerly, of Prussians and Russians, had made equal progress, though against greater resistance and more difficulties. His army advanced in four columns, or grand divisions, blockading the strong frontier fortresses of Metz, Sarre-Louis, Thionville, Luxembourg, and others, passing the defiles of the Vosges, and pushing forward to Joinville, Vitry, and Saint Dizier. The Army of Silesia was thus placed in communication with the Grand Army, the advanced divisions of which had penetrated as far into France as Bar-sur-Aube.

There was yet a third army of the allies, called that of the North of Europe. It was originally commanded by the Prince Royal of Sweden, and consisted of Swedes, Russians, and Germans. But the Crown Prince, whose assistance had been of such material consequence during the campaign of

Digitized by Google

1813, did not, it appears, take an active share in that of 1814. There may have been two reasons, and weighty ones, for this inactivity. To assist in driving the French out of Germany, seemed a duty which the Prince of Sweden could not, as such, decline, when the welfare of Sweden demanded it. But an invasion of his native soil might seem to Bernadotte a service unpleasing and unpopular in itself, and in which he could not be so rightfully engaged, at least while the freedom of Germany and the north opened another field of exertions, where his military efforts could be attended with no injury to his personal feelings. Denmark was still in arms, and Davoust still held out at Hamburg; and the presence of the Swedish army and its leader was necessary to subdue the one, and clear the north from the other. It must also be remembered, that Sweden, a poor kingdom, was not in a condition to sustain a war at a great distance from its frontier, and arising out of causes in which it was more remotely concerned. Her armies could not be recruited with the same ease as those of the greater powers; and Bernadotte, therefore, rather chose to incur the censure of being supposed cold in the cause of his confederates, than the risk of losing the only body of troops which Sweden had been able to fit out, and upon preserving which his throne probably depended The Allied Sovereigns, however, directed, that while the Crown Prince remained in the north, a part of the

Digitized by Google

Russian and Prussian corps, who were placed under his command, should be ordered to march towards France, for the purpose of augmenting the force which they already possessed in Holland and Belgium. The Crown Prince having, by a short war with Denmark, compelled that power to yield up her ancient possession of Norway, left Bennigsen to continue the siege of Hamburg, and advanced in person to Cologne, to assist in the complete liberation of Belgium.

The French troops, which had been drawn together, had been defeated at Merxem by General Bulow and Sir Thomas Graham; and although the French flag was still flying at Antwerp and Bergen-op-Zoom, Holland might be considered as liberated. General Winzengerode, at the head of the Russian troops, and the Saxons, under Thielman, being the corps detached, as above-mentioned, from the army of the North of Germany, soon reached the Low Countries, and entered into communication with Bulow. General Sir Thomas Graham, with the English and Saxons, and with such Dutch and Flemish troops as could be collected, was left to blockade Bergen-op-Zoom and Antwerp, whilst Bulow and Winzengerode were at liberty to enter France on the northern frontier: And thus, in the hour of need, (which soon afterwards arrived,) they were to act as a reserve to the army of Silesia under Blucher. They pushed on as far as Laon.

Digitized by Google

These advances, which carried the armies of the allies so far into the bosom of France, and surrounded with blockades the frontier fortresses of that kingdom, were not made without an honourable though ineffectual opposition, on such points where the French military could make any stand against the preponderating numbers of the invaders. The people of the country in general neither welcomed nor opposed the allies. In some places they were received with acclamation—in a few others some opposition was tendered—they encountered desperate resistance nowhere. The allies did all that discipline could to maintain strict order among their troops; but where there were so many free corps,—Huhlans, Croats, and Cossacks,—whose only pay is what they can plunder, occasional trangressions necessarily took place. The services of these irregular troops were, however, indispensable. The Cossacks, in particular, might be termed the eyes of the army. Accustomed to act in small parties when necessary, they threaded woods, swam rivers, and often presented themselves unexpectedly in villages many miles distant from the main army to which they belonged, thus impressing the French with an idea of the numbers and activity of the allies far beyond the truth. These Arabs of the North, as Napoleon termed them, always announced their party as the advanced guard of a considerable force, for whom they ordered provisions and

quarters to be prepared; and thus awed the inhabitants into acquiescence in their demands. They are not reported to have been cruel, unless when provoked, but were not in general able to resist temptations to plunder. The excursions of these and other light troops were of coure distressing to the French territory.

On the other hand, in two or three cases, armed citizens in the towns, summoned by small parties of the allies, fired upon flags of truce, and thus justified severe reprisals. It was said to be by Buonaparte's strict orders that such actions were committed, the purpose being, if possible, to excite deadly hatred betwixt the French and the allies. Indeed, in the reverse of the circumstances, in which each had formerly stood, Napoleon and the Austrian generals seemed to have exchanged system and sentiments. He now, as the Archduke Charles did in 1809, called out every peasent to arms; while Schwartzenberg, like Napoleon at that earlier period, denounced threats of military execution, without mercy or quarter, to every rustic who should obey the summons. The impartial historian must proclaim, in the one case as in the other, that the duty of resistance in the defence of our native country, does not depend on the character of a man's weapons, or the colour of his coat; and that the armed citizen is entitled, equally with the regular soldier, to the benefit of the laws of war, so long as he does not himself violate them. But from these

Digitized by Google

various causes, it was plain that the present apathy of the French people was only temporary, and that some sudden and unforseen cause was not unlikely to rouse so sensitive and high-spirited a people into a state of general resistance, by which the allies could not fail to be great sufferers. Rapidity in their movements was the most obvious remedy against such a danger; but this was the military quality least proper to coalitions, where many people must be consulted; and, besides, was inconsistent with the well-known habits of the Germans, but especially of the Austrians.

It seems also, that the allies, having safely formed an almost complete military line from Langres to Chalons, found themselves at some loss how to use their advantages. Nothing could be better situated than their present position, for such a daring enterprise as was now termed a *Hourra* upon Paris; and as all the high roads, departing from various points of the extensive line which they held, converged on the capital as a common centre, while the towns and villages, through which these roads passed, afforded an ample supply of provisions, this march might have been accomplished almost without opposition, but for the tardy movements of the Grand Army. The real weakness of Napoleon had been disguised by the noisy and exaggerated rumours concerning his preparations; and now when the allies learned that such an opportunity had exist-

Digitized by Google

ed, they learned, at the same time, that it was well-nigh lost, or at least that the road to Paris must first be cleared by a series of bloody actions. In these the allies could not disguise from themselves the possibility of their receiving severe checks; and under this apprehension they began to calculate the consequences of such a defeat, received in the centre of France, as that which they had suffered under the walls of Dresden. There was here no favourable screen of mountains to secure their retreat, no strong positions for checking a pursuing army, as in the case of Vandamme, and turning a defeat into a victory. The frontier which they had passed was penetrated, not subdued—its fortresses, so strong and numerous, were in the greater part masked, not taken—so that their retreat upon the Rhine must be exposed to all the dangers incident to passing in disorder through a country in complete possession of the enemy.

General councils of war seldom agree upon recommending bold measures. In this sense Solomon says, that in the multitude of counsellors, there is safety; meaning that the most cautious, if not the wisest measures, are sure to have the approbation of the majority.

Accordingly, this spirit predominating in the councils of the allies, led to a degree of uncertainty in their movements on this momentous occasion, which, as is usual, endeavoured to disguise itself under the guise of prudence. They resolved that

Digitized by Google

the Grand Army should halt a short space at Langres, in hopes either that Napoleon, renewing the negotiation, the scene of which was now to be transferred to Chatillon, upon the Seine, would avert his present danger, by acquiescing in the terms of the allies; or that the French nation, an event still less likely to happen, would become tired of the military monarch, whose ambition had brought such distress upon the country. In the meanwhile, the allies declined the offers of such Royalists as came forward in the name, and for the interest of the exiled family, uniformly replying, that they would give no weight to any expression of the sentiments of the French people, unless it was made in some quarter of the kingdom where it could not be supposed to be influenced by the presence of the allied army. They trusted chiefly at that moment to the effect of negotiation with the present possessor of the throne.

But Napoleon, as firmly determined in his purpose as the allies were doubtful, knowing himself to be the soul of his army, and absolute lord of his own actions, felt all the advantage which a bold, active, and able swordsman has in encountering an opponent, whose skill is less distinguished, and whose determination is more flexible than his own. The allies had presented in the Grand Army a front of 97,000 men, Mareschal Blucher one of 40,000, affording a disposable force of 137,000. To oppose this the French

Digitized by Google

Emperor had only, of old troops, independent of those under Suchet in Catalonia, under Soult near Bayonne, and also of garrisons, about 50,000 men; nor could he hope to add to them more than 70,000 conscripts. Nay, in fact his levies, so far as they could be brought into the field, fell greatly short of this number; for the allies were in possession of a considerable part of the kingdom of France, and, in this moment of general confusion, it was impossible to enforce the law of conscription, which was at all times obnoxious. It was soon proved, that he who so lately had led half-a-million of men to the Vistula, and 300,000 to the banks of the Elbe, could not now muster, for the protection of the capital of his own empire, a disposable force of more than 70,000 men.

The defensive war had no doubt considerable advantages to one who knew so well how to use them. The highways, by which the allies must advance, formed a half or quarter circle of rays, converging, as already mentioned, on Paris as a centre. A much smaller army might, therefore, oppose a large one, because, lying between Paris and the enemy, they must occupy the same roads by a much shorter line of communication than the invaders who were farther from the centre, where the roads diverged to a greater distance from each other. With this advantage of collocation to balance a great inferiority in numerical force, Buonaparte advanced to play for the

Digitized by Google

most momentous stake ever disputed, with a degree of military skill which has never been matched.

Arrived at Chalons on the 26th January, Buonaparte took the command of such an army as he had been able to assemble, by the concentration of the troops under the Mareschals Victor, Marmont, Macdonald, and Ney, all of whom had retreated from the frontier. So much were the French corps d'armée reduced, that these great and distinguished generals, who, in former times, would have commanded 60,000 or 70,000 men each, had under them all, when concentrated, but a total of 52,000, to which Napoleon was only able to add about 20,000 brought from Paris. But no one ever understood better than Buonaparte, the great military doctrine, that victory does not depend on the comparative result of numerical superiority in general, but on the art of obtaining such a superiority on the field of action itself.

Blucher was, as usual, the foremost in advance, and Napoleon resolved to bestow on this active and inveterate enemy, the terrible honour of his first attack, hoping to surprise the Silesian corps d'armée before it could receive succour from the army of Schwartzenberg. The Mareschal was apprised of the Emperor's purpose, and lost no time in concentrating his forces at Brienne, on the Aube, fourteen miles below Bar. This is a small village, seated on the

Digitized by Google

ascent of a hill. The place has but two streets, one of which ascends to the Chateau, occupied formerly as a Royal Academy for young persons designed for the army; the other conducts to Arcis-sur-l'Aube. The Chateau is partly surrounded by a park or chase. It was at the military school of Brienne that Napoleon acquired the rudiments of that skill in the military art with which he had almost prostrated the world, and had ended by placing it in array against him; and it was here he came to commence what seemed his last series of efforts for victory;—like some animals of the chase, who, when hard pressed by the hunters, are said to direct their final attempts at escape upon the point from which they have first started.

The alert movements of Napoleon surpassed the anticipation of Blucher. He was at table with his staff in the Chateau. General Alsufieff, a Russian, occupied the town of Brienne, and General Sacken's corps was drawn up in columns, on the road from Brienne to La Rothiere. At once a horrible tumult was heard. The Russian cavalry, two thousand in number, were completely driven in by those of Napoleon, and at the same moment Ney attacked the town; while a body of French grenadiers, who, favoured by the wooded and broken character of the ground, had been enabled to get into the park, threatened to make prisoners all who were in the Chateau. Blucher, with his officers, had barely time to reach a postern,

Digitized by Google

where they were under the necessity of leading their horses down a stair, and in that way made their escape with difficulty. The bold resistance of Alsufieff defended the town against Ney, and Sacken advanced to Alsufieff's assistance. The Cossacks also fell on the rear of the French in the park, and Buonaparte's own safety was compromised in the melée. Men were killed by his side, and he was obliged to draw his sword in his own defence. At the very moment of attack, his attention was engaged by the sight of a tree, which he recollected to be the same under which, during the hours of recreation at Brienne, he used, when a school-boy, to peruse the Jerusalem Delivered of Tasso. If the curtain of fate had risen before the obscure youth, and discovered to him in the same spot, his own image as Emperor of France, contending against the Scythians of the desert for life and power, how wonderful would have seemed the presage, when the mere concurrence of circumstances strikes the mind of those who look back upon it with awful veneration for the hidden ways of providence! Lefebvre Desnouettes fell, dangerously wounded, in charging at the head of the guards. The town caught fire, and was burned to the grouud; but it was not until eleven at night that the Silesian army ceased to make efforts for recovering the place, and that Blucher, retreating from Brienne, took up a position in

Digitized by Google

the rear of that town, and upon that of La Rothiere.

The result of the battle of Brienne was indecisive, and the more unsatisfactory to Buonaparte, as the part of Blucher's force engaged did not amount to 20,000 men, and the sole advantage gained over them, was that of keeping the field of battle. Napoleon's principal object, which was to divide Blucher from the Grand Army, had altogether failed. It was necessary, however, to proclaim the engagement as a victory, and much pains was taken to represent it as such. But when it was afterwards discovered to be merely a smart skirmish, without any material results, the temporary deception only served to injure the cause of Napoleon.

On the first of February, Blucher, strongly reinforced from the Grand Army, prepared in his turn to assume the offensive. It would have been Napoleon's wish to have avoided an engagement; but a retreat across the Aube, by the bridge of L'Esmont, which was the only mode of passing that deep and scarce fordable river, would have exposed his rear to destruction. He therefore risked a general action. Blucher attacked the line of the French on three points, assaulting at once the villages of La Rothiere, Dienville, and Chaumont. The conflict, in which the Prince Royal of Wirtemberg distinguished himself, was hard fought during the whole

Digitized by Google

day, but in the evening the French were repulsed on all points, and Buonaparte was compelled to retreat across the Aube, after losing 4000 prisoners, and no less than seventy-three guns. Ney, by the Emperor's orders, destroyed the bridge at l'Esmont. The allies were not aware of the amount of their advantage, and suffered the French to retire unmolested.

A general council of war, held at the castle of Brienne, now resolved that the two armies (although having so lately found the advantage of mutual support) should separate from each other, and that Blucher, detaching himself to the northward, and uniting under his command the division of Yorck and Kleist, both of whom had occupied St. Dizier and Vitry, should approach Paris by the Marne; while Prince Schwartzenberg and the Grand Army should descend on the capital by the course of the Seine. The difficulty of finding provisions for such immense armies was doubtless in part the cause of this resolution. But it was likewise recommended by the success of a similar plan of operations at Dresden, and afterwards at Leipsic, where the enemies of Buonaparte approached him from so many different quarters as to render it impossible for him to make head against one army without giving great opportunity of advantage to the others.

Buonaparte reached Troyes, on which he retreat-

Digitized by Google

ed after crossing the Aube, in a disastrous condition; but his junction with his Old Guard, whose appearance and high state of appointments restored courage to the dejected troops who had been beaten at La Rothiere, gave a new impulse to the feelings of his army, and restored the young levies to confidence. He resolved, taking advantage of the division of the two armies of the allies, to march upon that of Blucher. But, in order to disguise his purpose, he first sent a small division upon Bar-la-Seine, to alarm the Austrians with an attack upon their right wing. Schwartzenberg immediately apprehended that Buonaparte was about to move with his whole force in that direction; a movement which, in fact would have been most favourable for the allies, since it would have left the road to Paris undefended, and open to the whole. But, terrified by the idea that his left flank might be turned or forced, the Austrian general moved his chief strength in that direction; thus at once suspending his meditated march on the Seine, and increasing the distance betwixt the Grand Army and that of Silesia. Buonaparte having deceived Schwartzenberg by this successful feint, evacuated Troyes, leaving the Mareschals Victor and Oudinot to oppose the Austrians with very inadequate means, while he directed his own march against Blucher.

Blucher, in the meanwhile, having left Napoleon in front of the Grand Army, and not doubting that

Digitized by Google

the Austrians would find him sufficient employment, hurried forward to the Marne, forced Macdonald to retreat from Chateau Thierry, and advanced his head quarters to Vertus; while Sacken, who formed his vanguard, pushed his light troops as far as Ferté la Jouarre, and was nearer to Paris than was the Emperor himself. General d'Yorck had advanced as far as Meaux, and Paris was in the last degree of alarm.

Even Buonaparte himself was so much struck by the inextricable situation of his affairs after the defeat of La Rothiere, that a thought occurred to him, which posterity, excepting on his own avowal, would hardly give credit to. The plan which suggested itself, was that of sacrificing his own authority to the peace of France, and of abdicating the crown in favour of the Bourbons, while he had yet the means of resistance in his possession. He felt he had reigned and combated long enough for his own glory, and justly thought that the measure of his renown would be filled up by such an act of generous self-denial. But a maxim occurred to him, (suggested, he says, by Mr. Fox,) that restored monarchs could never forgive those who had occupied their place. Probably his thoughts turned also to the murder of the Duke d'Enghien; for there was no other point of personal offence betwixt Buonaparte and the exiled family, which their restoration, if the event took place

Digitized by Google

by his intervention, might not have fully atoned for. If our conjecture be real, it serves to show how such a crime operates in its consequences to obstruct its perpetrator in future attempts to recover the path of virtue and honour. Had Napoleon been really capable of the generous act of self-denial which he meditated, he must have been ranked, in despite of the doubtful points of his character, as one of the greatest men who ever lived.

But the spirit of egotism and suspicion prevailed, and the hopes of accomplishing the discomfiture and defeat of the Silesian army, appeared preferable to meriting, by one act of disinterested devotion, the eternal gratitude of Europe; and the philosopher and friend of humanity relapsed into the warrior and conqueror. There is, no doubt, something meritorious in the conceiving of great and noble resolutions, even although they remain unrealized. But this patriotism of the imagination does not rise to a higher scale of merit, than the sensibility of those who cannot hear a tale of sorrow without weeping, but whose sympathy never assumes the expensive form of actual charity.

The army of Napoleon was now to be transferred from the high road leading from Paris to Troyes, to that leading from Chalons to Paris, on which Blucher was operating, and that by flank marches through an impracticable country; but which, if

Digitized by Google

they could be accomplished, would enable the French Emperor to attack the Silesian army at unawares in flank and rear. The lateral cross-roads, which connect one highway with another through France, are generally scarce passable in winter, even for the purpose of ordinary communication, much less for an army with its carriages and artillery. Buonaparte had to traverse a country intersected with thickets, marshes, drains, ditches, and impediments of every kind; the weather was execrable, and but for the extraordinary exertions of the Mayor of Barbonne, who collected five hundred horses to extricate the guns, they must have been abandoned on the road. But by dint of perseverance, Buonaparte accomplished this forced march, on 10th of February, and the flank of the Silesian army was in consequence placed at his mercy. They were moving on without the least suspicion of such an attack. Sacken led the advance, the Russian General Alsufieff followed, and Blucher himself brought up the rear with the main body. All intent upon the advance to Paris, they were marching with careless haste, and had suffered such large intervals to take place betwixt their divisions, as to expose them to be attacked in detail.

Buonaparte fell upon the central division of Alsufieff, at Champeaubert, surrounded, defeated, and

Digitized by Google

totally dispersed them, taking their artillery, and 2000 prisoners, while the remainder of the division fled into the woods, and attempted to escape individually. The whole force of the Emperor was now interposed between the advanced-guard under Sacken, and the main body under Blucher. It was first directed towards the former, whom Napoleon encountered sooner than he expected, for Sacken, on hearing of the action at Champeaubert, instantly countermarched his division to assist Alsufieff, or at least to rejoin Blucher; but he was overwhelmed by the superior force of the French, and having lost one-fourth of his division, about 5000 men, was forced to leave the high-road, upon which Blucher was advancing, and retreat by that on Chateau Thierry. At this village Sacken was joined by General Yorck and Prince William of Prussia; but, still unable to make a stand, they could only secure a retreat by destroying the bridge over the Marne. War began now to show itself in its most hideous forms. The stragglers and fugitives who could not cross the bridge before its destruction, were murdered by the peasantry, while the allied soldiers, in revenge, plundered the village of Chateau Thierry, and practised every excess of violence. The defeat of Sacken took place on the 12th of February.

Blucher, in the meanwhile, ignorant of the extent

Digitized by Google

of the force by which his vanguard had been attacked, pressed forward to their support, and, in a wide and uninclosed country, suddenly found himself in the front of the whole army of Napoleon, flushed with the double victory which they had already gained, and so numerous as to make a retreat indispensable on the part of the Prussians. Blucher, if surprised, remained undismayed. Having only three regiments of calvary, he had to trust for safety to the steadiness of his infantry. He formed them into squares, protected by artillery, and thus commenced his retreat by alternate divisions; those battalions which were in motion to the rear, being protected by the fire of the others then standing fast, and covering them with theirs while they retired in turn. The French cavalry, though so strong as to operate at once on the flanks and rear, failed in being able to break a single square. After the Prussians had retired several leagues in this manner, fighting every foot of their way, they were nearly intercepted by a huge column of French horse, which, having made a circuit so as to pass them, had drawn up on the causeway to intercept their retreat. Without a moment's hesitation, Blucher instantly attacked them with such a murderous fire of infantry and artillery, as forced them from the high-road, and left the passage free. The Prussians found the village of Etoges, through which they were obliged to pass, also occupied by the

Digitized by Google

enemy; but here also they cleared their way by dint of fighting. This expedition of the Marne, as it is called, is always accounted one of Napoleon's military chef-d'œuvres; for a flank march, undertaken through such a difficult country, and so completely successful, is not perhaps recorded in history. On the other hand, if Blucher lost any credit by the too great security of his march, he regained it by the masterly manner in which he executed his retreat. Had the army which he commanded in person shared the fate of his vanguard, it is probable there would have been no campaign of Paris.

The Parisians, in the meantime, saw at length actual proofs that Napoleon had been victorious. Long columns of prisoners moved through their streets, banners were displayed, the cannon thundered, the press replied, and the pulpit joined, in extolling and magnifying the dangers which the citizens had escaped, and the merits of their preserver.

In the midst of the joy natural on such an occasion, the Parisians suddenly learned that the town of Fontainebleau was occupied by Hungarian hussars, and that not Cossacks only, but Tartars, Baskirs, and Kalmouks, tribes of a wild and savage aspect, a kind of Asiatic Ogres, to whom popular credulity imputed a taste for the flesh of children, had appeared in the neighbourhood of Nangis. These renewed signs of approaching danger, arose from the Grand Army of the allies having carried, at the point of the bayonet,

Digitized by Google

Nogent and Montereau, and advanced the head-quarters of the monarchs to Pont-sur-Seine. This alarm to Paris was accompanied by another. Schwartzenberg, learning the disasters on the Marne, not only pushed forward from three directions on the capital, but dispatched forces from his right towards Provins, to threaten Napoleon's rear and communications. Leaving the pursuit of Blucher, the Emperor counter-marched on Meaux, and, marching from thence to Guignes, he joined the army of Oudinot and Victor, who were retreating before Schwartzenberg. He here found the reinforcements which he had drawn from Spain, about 20,000 in number, tried and excellent troops. With this army he now fronted that of Schwartzenberg, and upon the 17th February, commenced the offensive at all points, and with success, possessing himself of Nangis, and nearly destroying the corps under Count Pahlen at Mormant. The Prince Royal of Wirtemberg was forced to retreat to Montereau.

So alarmed were the allies at the near approach of their terrible enemy, that a message was sent to Napoleon from the allied sovereigns, by Prince Schwartzenberg's aide-de-camp, Count Par, stating their surprise at his offensive movement, since they had given orders to their plenipotentiaries at Chatillon to sign the preliminaries of peace, on the terms which had been assented to by the French envoy, Caulaincourt.

Digitized by Google

This letter, of which we shall hereafter give a more full explanation, remained for some days unanswered, during which Napoleon endeavoured to push his advantages. He recovered the bridge at Montereau, after a desperate attack, in which the Crown Prince of Wirtemberg signalised himself by the valour of his defence. In the course of the action, Napoleon returned to his old profession of an artilleryman, and pointed several guns himself, to the great delight of the soldiers. They trembled, however, when the fire attracted the attention of the enemy, whose balls began to be aimed at the French battery. "Go, my children," said Buonaparte, ridiculing their apprehensions; "the ball is not cast that is to kill me."

Having taken the place by storm, Buonaparte, dissatisfied with the number of men he had lost, loaded with reproaches some of his best officers. Montbrun was censured for want of energy, and Digeon for the scarcity of ammunition with which the artillery was served; but it was chiefly on Victor, the Duke of Belluno, that his resentment discharged itself. He imputed to him negligence, in not having attacked Montereau on the day before the action, when it was unprovided for resistance; and he ordered him to retire from the service. The Marischal endeavoured to obtain a hearing in his own defence, but for some time could not succeed in checking the stream of reproaches. At length they were softened into a

Digitized by Google

charge of broken health, and the love of repose, incident to wounds and infirmities. "The best bed," said the Emperor, "which the quarters afford, must now be sought out for the once indefatigable Victor." The Mareschal felt the charge more severely in proportion as it became moderated within what was probably the bounds of truth; but he would not consent to quit the service.

"I have not," he said, "forgot my original trade. I will take a musket. Victor will become a private in the Guard."—Buonaparte could not resist this mark of attachment. He held out his hand.—"Let us be friends;" he replied, "I cannot restore to you your corps d'armée, which I have given to Girard; but I will place you at the head of two divisions of the Guard. Go—assume your command, and let there be no more of this matter betwixt us."

It was upon such occasions, when he subdued his excited feelings to a state of kindness and generosity, that Buonaparte's personal conduct seems to have been most amiable.

The allies, in the meantime, remembering, perhaps, though somewhat of the latest, the old fable of the bunch of arrows, resolved once more to enter into communication with the Silesian army, and, concentrating near Troyes, to accept of battle, if Buonaparte should offer it. The indefatigable Blucher had already recruited his troops, and, being reinfor-

Digitized by Google

ced by a division of the army of the North, under Langeron, moved southward from Chalons, to which he had retreated after his disaster at Montmirail, to Mery, a town situated upon the Seine, to the north-east of Troyes, to which last place the allied monarchs had again removed their head-quarters. Here he was attacked with fury by the troops of Buonaparte, who made a desperate attempt to carry the bridge and town, and thus prevent the proposed communication between the Silesian army and that of Schwartzenberg. The bridge, which was of wood, was set fire to in the struggle. The sharp-shooters fought amid its blazing and cracking beams. The Prussians, however, kept possession of Mery.

A council of war was now held by the allies. Blucher urged the fulfilment of their original purpose of hazarding an action with Napoleon. But the Austrians had again altered their mind, and determined on a general retreat as far as the line between Nancy and Langres; the very position on which the allies had paused when they first entered France. The principal cause alleged for this retrograde movement, by which they must cede half the ground they had gained since their entering France, was, that Augereau, who had hitherto contented himself with his successful defence of Lyons, had been recruited by considerable bodies of troops from the army of Suchet, which had been employed in Catalonia. Thus rein-

Digitized by Google

forced, the French Mareschal was now about to assume the offensive against the Austrian forces at Dijon, act upon their communications with Switzerland, and raise in a mass the warlike peasantry of the departments of the Doubs, the Saonne, and the mountains of the Vosges. To prevent such consequences, Schwartzenberg sent General Bianchi to the rear with a large division of his forces, to support the Austrians at Dijon; and conceived his army too much weakened by this detachment to retain his purpose of risking a general action. It was therefore resolved, that if the head-quarters of the Grand Army were removed to Langres, those of Blucher should be once more established on the Marne, where, strengthened by the arrival of the northern army, which was now approaching from Flanders, he might resume his demonstration upon Paris, in case Buonaparte should engage himself in the pursuit of the Grand Army of the allies.

This retrograde movement gave much disgust to the Austrian soldiers, who considered it as the preface to a final abandonment of the invasion. Their resentment showed itself, not only in murmurs and in tearing out the green boughs with which, as in sign of victory, they usually ornament their helmets and schakos, but also, as is too frequently the case in similar instances, in neglect of discipline, and excesses committed in the country.

Digitized by Google

To diminish the bad effects arising from this discontent among the troops, Schwartzenberg published an order of the day, commanding the officers to enforce the strictest discipline, and at the same time explain to the army that the present retreat was only temporary, and that on joining with its reserves, which had already crossed the Rhine, the Grand Army would instantly resume the offensive, while Field-Mareschal Blucher, at present moving northward, so as to form a junction with Winzengerode and Bulow, should at the same time attack the rear and flank of the enemy. The publishing this plan of the campaign, went far to rouse the dejected confidence of the Austrian army.

On the evening of the 22d February, an answer to the letter of Schwartzenberg was received, but it was addressed exclusively to the Emperor of Austria; and while its expressions of respect are bestowed liberally on that power, the manner in which the other members of the coalition are treated, shows unabated enmity, ill-concealed under an affectation of contempt. The Emperor of France expressed himself willing to treat upon the basis of the Frankfort declaration, but exclaimed against the terms which his own envoy, Caulaincourt, had proposed to the plenipotentiaries of the other powers. In short, the whole letter indicated, not that Napoleon desired a general peace with the allies, but that it was his anxious wish

Digitized by Google

to break up the coalition, by making a separate peace with Austria. This counteracted in spirit and letter the purpose of the confederates, distinctly expressed in their communication to Napoleon.

The Emperor Francis and his ministers were resolved not to listen to any proposals which went to separate the Austrian cause from that of their allies. It was therefore at first resolved that no answer should be sent to the letter; but the desire of gaining time for bringing up the reserves of the Grand Army, who were approaching the Swiss frontier under the direction of the Prince of Hesse-Homberg, as also for the union of the army of the north, under Bulow and Winzengerode, with that of Silesia, determined them to accept the offer of a suspension of hostilities. Under these considerations, Prince Wenceslaus of Lichtenstein was sent to the head-quarters of Napoleon, to treat concerning an armistice. The Emperor seemed to be in a state of high hope, and called upon the Austrians not to sacrifice themselves to the selfish views of Russia, and the miserable policy of England. He appointed Count Flahault his commissioner to negotiate for a line of demarcation, and directed him to meet with the envoy from the allies at Lusigny, on 24th February.

On the night of the 23d, the French bombarded Troyes, which the allied troops evacuated according to their latest plan of the campaign. The French en-

Digitized by Google

tered the town on the 24th, when the sick and wounded, left behind by the allies, were dragged out to grace Napoleon's triumph ; and a scene, not less deplorable, but of another description, was performed at the same time.

Amid the high hopes which the entrance of the allies into France had suggested to the enemies of Buonaparte's government, five persons, the chief of whom were the Marquis de Widranges, and the Chevalier de Gouault, had displayed the white cockade, and other emblems of loyalty to the exiled family. They had received little encouragement to take so decided a step either from the Crown Prince of Wirtemberg, or from the Emperor Alexander; both of whom, although approving the principles on which these gentlemen acted, refused to sanction the step they had taken, or to warrant them against the consequences. It does not appear that their declaration had excited any corresponding enthusiasm in the people of Troyes or the neighbourhood; and it would have been wiser in Napoleon to have overlooked such a trifling movement, which he might have represented as arising from the dotage of loyalty, rather than to have, at this critical period, called the public attention to the Bourbons, by denouncing and executing vengeance upon their partizans. Nevertheless Napoleon had scarce entered Troyes, when the Chevalier Gouault (the

Digitized by Google

other Royalists having fortunately escaped,) was seized upon, tried by a military commission, condemned, and immediately shot. He died with the utmost firmness, exclaiming, "*Vive le Roi!*" A violent and ill-timed decree promulgated the penalty of death against all who should wear the decorations of the Bourbons, and on all emigrants who should join the allies. The severity of the measure, so contrary to Napoleon's general conduct, of late years, towards the Bourbons and their followers, whom he had for a long period scarce even alluded to, made the world ascribe his unusual ferocity to an uncommon state of apprehension; and thus it gave farther encouragement to those into whom it was intended to strike terror.

At this period of the retreat of Schwartzenberg from Troyes, and the movement of Blucher towards the Marne, we must leave the armies which were contending in the interior of France, in order to retrace those movements upon the frontiers, which, though operating at a distance, tended at once to reinforce the invading armies, and to cripple Napoleon's means of defence.

It is difficult for the inhabitants of a peaceful territory to picture to themselves the miseries sus-

* It has been said that Napoleon had been persuaded to save his life. But the result was similar to the execution of Clarence.

Digitized by Google

tained by the country which formed the theatre of this sanguinary contest. While Buonaparte, like a tiger, hemmed in by hounds and hunters, now menaced one of his foes, now sprung furiously upon another, and while, although his rapid movements disconcerted and dismayed them, he still remained unable to destroy the individuals whom he had assailed, lest, while aiming to do so, he should afford a fatal advantage to those who were disengaged,—the scene of this desultory warfare was laid waste in the most merciless manner. The soldiers on both parts, driven to desperation by rapid marches through roads blocked with snow, or trodden into swamps, became reckless and pitiless; and, straggling from their columns in all directions, committed every species of excess upon the inhabitants. These evils are mentioned in the bulletins of Napoleon, as well as in the general orders of Schwartzenberg.

The peasants, with their wives and children, fled to caves, quarries, and woods, where the latter were starved to death by the inclemency of the season, and want of sustenance; and the former, collecting into small bodies, increased the terrors of war by pillaging the convoys of both armies, attacking small parties of all nations, and cutting off the sick, the wounded, and the stragglers. The repeated advance and retreat of the different contending parties,

Digitized by Google

exasperated these evils. Every fresh band of plunderers which arrived, was savagely eager after spoil, in proportion as the gleanings became scarce. In the words of Scripture, what the locust left was devoured by the palmer-worm—what escaped the Baskirs, and Kirgas, and Croats, of the Wolga, and Caspian and Turkish frontier, was seized by the half-clad and half-starved conscripts of Napoleon, whom want, hardship, and an embittered spirit, rendered as careless of the ties of country and language, as the others were indifferent to the general claims of humanity. The towns and villages, which were the scenes of actual conflict, were frequently burnt to the ground; and this not only in the course of the actions of importance which we have detailed, but in consequence of innumerable skirmishes fought in different points, which had no influence, indeed, upon the issue of the campaign, but increased incalculably the distress of the invaded country, by extending the terrors of battle, with fire, famine, and slaughter for its accompaniments, into the most remote and sequestered districts. The woods afforded no concealment, the churches no sanctuary; even the grave itself gave no cover to the relics of mortality. The villages were everywhere burnt, the farms wasted and pillaged, the abodes of man, and all that belongs to peaceful industry and domestic comfort, desolated and destroyed. Wolves, and other savage

Digitized by Google

animals, increased fearfully in the districts which had been laid waste by human hands, with ferocity congenial to their own. Thus were the evils which France had unsparingly inflicted upon Spain, Prussia, Russia, and almost every European nation, terribly retaliated within a few leagues of her own metropolis; and such were the consequences of a system, which, assuming military force for its sole principle and law, taught the united nations of Europe to repel its aggressions by means yet more formidable in extent than those which had been used in supporting them.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IV.

Retrospect of Military Events on the French Frontiers.—Defection of Murat, who declares in favour of the Allies.—Its consequences.—Augereau is compelled to abandon Gex and Franche Compté.—The North of Germany and Flanders lost to France.—Carnot intrusted with the command of Antwerp.—Bergen-op-Zoom nearly taken by Sir Thomas Graham, but lost by the disorder of the troops in the moment of success.—The Allies take, and evacuate Soissons.—Bulow and Winzengerode unite with Blucher.—The Duke of Wellington forces his way through the Pays des Gaves.—State of the Royalists in the West of France.—Discontent of the old Republicans with Napoleon's Government.—Views of the different Members of the Alliance as to the Dynasties of the Bourbons and of Napoleon.—Proceedings of the Dukes of Berri and Angouleme, and Monsieur, the two latter of whom enter France.—The French defeated by Wellington at Orthez.—Bourdeaux is voluntarily surrendered to Marshal Beresford by the inhabitants, who mount the white cockade.—Details of the Negotiations of Chatillon.—Treaty of Chaumont, by which the Allies bind themselves of new to carry on the war with vigour.—Napoleon presents a singularly unreasonable contre-projet at Chatillon.—Congress at Chatillon broken up.

WHILE Napoleon was struggling, in the Campaign of Paris, for his very existence as a monarch, events were taking place on the frontiers, by all of which his fate was more or less influenced, and in almost all of them unfavourably. Of these events

Digitized by Google

we must give a brief detail, mentioning, at the same time, the influence which they individually produced upon the results of the war.

The defence of Italy had been committed to Prince Eugene Beauharnois, the Viceroy of that kingdom. He was entirely worthy of the trust, but was deprived of any means that remained to him of accomplishing his task, by the defection of Murat. We have often had occasion to describe Murat as distinguished on the field of battle—rather an undaunted and high-mettled soldier than a wise commander. As a sovereign he had little claim to distinction. He was good tempered, but vain, limited in capacity, and totally uninformed. Napoleon had not concealed his contempt of his understanding, and, after the retreat from Russia, had passed an oblique, but most intelligible censure on him, in a public bulletin. In writing to the wife of Murat, and his own sister, Napoleon had mentioned her husband disparagingly, as one who was brave only on the field of battle, but elsewhere as weak as a monk or a woman. Caroline, in answer, cautioned her brother to treat her husband with more respect. Napoleon, unaccustomed to suppress his sentiments, continued the same line of language and conduct.

Meanwhile Murat, in his resentment, listened to terms from Austria, in which, by the mediation of that state, which was interested in the recovery of

Digitized by Google

her Italian provinces, England was with difficulty induced to acquiesce. In consequence of a treaty formed with Austria, Murat declared himself in favour of the allies, and marched an army of 30,000 Neapolitans to Rome, for the purpose of assisting in the expulsion of the French from Italy. He speedily occupied Ancona and Florence. There was already in Italy an army of 30,000 Austrians, with whom the Viceroy had fought the indecisive battle of Roverbello, after which he retreated to the line of the Adige, on which he made a precarious stand, until the war was concluded. The appearance of Murat's army on the side of Austria, though he confined himself to a war of proclamations, was calculated to end all French influence in Italy. Counter revolutionary movements, in some of the Cantons of Switzerland, and in the mountains of Savoy, tended also to close the door through which Buonaparte had so often transferred the war into the Italian Peninsula, and from its northern provinces, into the heart of Austria herself.

The defection of Murat had the further effect, of disconcerting the measures which Napoleon had meditated, for recovery of the south-eastern frontier of France. Augereau had received orders to advance from Lyons, and receive the reinforcements which Eugene was to have dispatched from Italy across the Alps. These, it was calculated, would

Digitized by Google

have given the French Mareschal a decisive superiority, which might have enabled him to ascend towards the sources of the Saonne, call to arms the hardy peasantry of the Vosgesian mountains, interrupt the communications of the Austrian army, and excite a national and guerilla warfare in the rear of the allies.

To stimulate more highly the energies of his early comrade in arms, Napoleon caused the Empress Maria Louisa to wait upon the young Duchess of Castiglione, (the Mareschal's wife,) to prevail on her to use her influence with her husband, to exert all his talents and audacity in the present crisis. It was a singular feature of the declension of power, when it was thought that the command of the Emperor, imposed upon one of his Mareschals, might require being enforced by the interposition of a lady ; or rather, it implied that Napoleon was sensible that he was requiring of his officer something which no ordinary exertions could enable him to perform. He wrote, however, to Augereau himself, conjuring him to remember his early victories, and to forget that he was upwards of fifty years old. But exhortations, whether by a sovereign or lady, cannot supply the want of physical force.

Augereau was unable to execute the task imposed upon him, from not receiving the Italian reinforcements, which, as matters stood in Italy, Eugene

Digitized by Google

could not possibly spare. Detachments from Suchet's Spanish veterans did indeed join the Mareschal at Lyons, and enable him to advance on General Bubna, whom he compelled to retreat to Geneva. But the arrival of General Bianchi, with a strong reinforcement, which Schwartzenberg had dispatched for that purpose, restored the ascendancy of the allied armies on that frontier, especially as the Prince of Hesse Homberg also approached from Switzerland at the head of the Austrian reserves. The last general had no difficulty in securing the passes of Saonne. Augereau in consequence was compelled to abandon the country of Gex and Franche Compté, and again to return under the walls of Lyons. Napoleon was not more complaisant to his old comrade and tutor, than he had been to the other Mareschals in this campaign, who had not accomplished tasks which they had not the means to achieve. Augereau was publicly censured as being inactive and unenterprising.

The North of Germany and Flanders were equally lost to France, and French interest. Hamburg indeed still held out. But, as we have already said, it was besieged, or rather blockaded, by the allies, under Bennigsen, to whom the Crown Prince of Sweden had left that charge, when he himself, having put an end to the war with Denmark, had advanced towards Cologne, with the purpose of assisting in

Digitized by Google

clearing Belgium of the French, and then entering France from that direction, in support of the Silesian army. The Crown Prince showed no personal willingness to engage in the invasion of France. The causes which might deter him have been already conjectured. The Royalists added another, that he had formed views of placing himself at the head of the government of France, which the allied monarchs declined to gratify. It is certain that, whether from motives of prudence or estrangement, he was, after his arrival in Flanders, no longer to be considered as an active member of the coalition.

In the meantime, Antwerp was bravely and scientifically defended by the veteran republican, Carnot. This celebrated statesman and engineer had always opposed himself to the strides which Napoleon made towards arbitrary power, and had voted against his election to the situation of Consul for life, and that of Emperor. It does not appear that Napoleon resented this opposition. He had been obliged to Carnot before his unexampled rise, and afterwards he was so far mindful of him, as to cause his debts to be paid at a moment of embarrassment. Carnot, on his part, took the invasion of France as a signal for every Frenchman to use his talents in the public defence, and, offering his services to the Emperor, was intrusted with the command of Antwerp.

Digitized by Google

Bergen-op-Zoom was also still occupied by the French. This city, one of the most strongly fortified in the world, was nearly taken by a coup-de-main, by Sir Thomas Graham. After a night-attack of the boldest description, the British columns were so far successful, that all ordinary obstacles seemed overcome. But their success was followed by a degree of disorder which rendered it unavailing, and many of the troops who had entered the town were killed, or obliged to surrender. Thus an enterprise, ably planned and bravely executed, miscarried even in the moment of victory, by accidents for which neither the general nor the officers immediately in command could be justly held responsible. General Graham was, however, reinforced from England, and was still enabled, with the help of the Swedes and Danes, as well as Dutch and Flemish corps, to check any sallies from Bergen or from Antwerp.

The liberation of the Low Countries being so nearly accomplished, Bulow pressed forward on La Fere, and finally occupied Laon. Here, upon the 26th of February, he formed a junction with Winzengerode, who, bequeathing Juliers, Venloo, and Maestricht, to the observation of the Crown Prince, marched through the forest of Ardennes. Soissons offered a show of desperate resistance, but the com-

Digitized by Google

mandant being killed, the place was delivered up. This was on the 13th February, and the allies ought to have held this important place. But in their haste to join Prince Blucher, they evacuated Soissons, which Mortier caused to be presently re-occupied by a strong French garrison. The possession of this town became shortly afterwards a matter of great consequence. In the meantime, Bulow and Winzengerode, with their two additional armies, entered into communication with Blucher, of whom they now formed the rear-guard, and more than restored to him the advantage he had lost by the defeats at Montmirail and Champeaubert.

On the south-western frontier the horizon seemed yet darker. The Duke of Wellington having entered Spain, was about to force his way through the strong country, called the *Pays des Gaves*, the land, that is, of the ravines formed by rivers and torrents. He maintained such severe discipline, and paid with such regularity for the supplies which he needed from the country, that he was voluntarily furnished with provisions of every kind; while the army of Soult, though stationed in the Mareschal's own country, obtained none, save by the scanty and unwilling means of military requisition. In consequence of this strict discipline, the presence of the British troops was far from being distressing to the country; and some efforts made by General Harispe,

Digitized by Google

to raise guerillas among his countrymen, the Basques, to act on the Duke of Wellington's rear, became totally ineffectual. The small sea-port town of St. Jean de Luz supplied the English army with provisions and reinforcements. The activity of English commerce speedily sent cargoes of every kind into the harbour, where before were only to be seen a few fishing-boats. The goods were landed under a tariff of duties settled by the Duke of Wellington; and so ended the Continental System.

In the meantime, the state of the west of France was such as held out the highest political results to the British, in case they should be able to overcome the obstacles presented by the strong entrenched camp at Bayonne, on which Soult rested his right flank, extending a line of great strength upon the Adour and the neighbouring Gaves.

We have mentioned already the confederacy of Royalists, which was now in full activity, and extended by faithful agents through the whole west of France. They were now at their post, and preparing everything for an explosion. The police of Buonaparte were neither ignorant of the existence or purpose of this conspiracy, but they were unable to obtain such precise information as should detect and crush it. The two Messrs de Polignac were deeply engaged, and, becoming the subjects of suspicion, it was only by a dexterous and speedy flight from Paris

Digitized by Google

that they eluded captivity, or perhaps death. They succeeded in reaching the army of the allies, and were, it is believed, the first who conveyed to the Emperor Alexander an exact state of the royal party in the interior of France, particularly in the capital, which made a powerful impression on the mind of that prince.

Throughout the west of France there started up a thousand agents of a party, which were now to awake from a sleep of twenty years. Bourdeaux, with its loyal mayor, Count Lynch, and the greater part of its citizens, was a central point of the association. A great part of the inhabitants were secretly regimented and embodied, and had arms in their possession, and artillery, gunpowder, and ball, concealed in their warehouses. The celebrated La Rochejacquelein, made immortal by the simple and sublime narrative of his consort, solicited the cause of the royalists at the English head-quarters, and made repeated and perilous journeys from thence to Bourdeaux, and back again. Saintonge and La Vendée were organized for insurrection by a loyal clergyman, the Abbé Jaqualt. The brothers of Roche-Aymon prepared Perigord for a struggle. The Duke of Duras had engaged a thousand gentlemen at Touraine. Lastly, the Chouans had again prepared for a rising under the Count de Vitray, and Tranquille, a celebrated leader, called *Le Capitaine sans peur*. Numerous

Digitized by Google

bands of refractory conscripts, rendered desperate by their state of outlawry, were ready at Angers, Nantes, and Orleans, to take arms in the cause of the Bourbons, under the Count de l'Orge, Monsieur d'Airac, Count Charles d'Autichamp, the Count de Suzannet, and Cadoudal, brother of the celebrated Georges, and his equal in courage and resolution. But all desired the previous advance of the *Blue-Flints*, as they called the English, their own being of a different colour. Trammelled by the negotiation at Chatillon, and various other political impediments, and anxious especially not to lead these high-spirited gentlemen into danger, by encouraging a premature rising, the English ministers at home, and the English general in France, were obliged for a time to restrain rather than encourage the forward zeal of the Royalists.

Such caution was the more necessary, as there existed at the same time another conspiracy, also directed against Buonaparte's person, or at least his authority; and it was of importance that neither should explode until some means could be found of preventing their checking and counteracting each other. This second class of malcontents consisted of those, who, like Buonaparte himself, owed their political consequence to the Revolution; and who, without regard to the Bourbons, were desirous to get free of the tyranny of Napoleon. These were the disappointed and degraded Republicans, the deceived

Digitized by Google

Constitutionalists, all who had hoped and expected that the Revolution would have paved the way for a free government, in which the career of preferment should be open to talents of every description,—a lottery in which, doubtless, each hoped that his own abilities would gain some important prize. The sceptre of Napoleon had weighed harder upon this class than even upon the Royalists. He had no dislike to the principles of the latter, abstractedly considered; he felt some respect for their birth and titles, and only wished to transfer their affections from the House of Bourbon, and to attach them to that of Napoleon. Accordingly, he distributed employments and honours among such of the old noblesse as could be brought to accept them, and obviously felt pride in drawing to his Court names and titles, known in the earlier periods of French history. Besides, until circumstances shook his throne, and enlarged their means of injuring him, he considered the number of the Royalists as small, and their power as despicable. But from those active spirits, who had traded in revolution after revolution for so many years, he had much more both to fear and to dislike, especially as they were now understood to be headed by his ex-minister Talleyrand, with whose talents, both for scheming and executing political changes, he had so much reason to be acquainted. To this class of his enemies he imputed the hardy attempt

Digitized by Google

which was made, not without prospects of success, to overthrow his government during his absence in Russia. "You have the tail, but not the head," had been the words of the principal conspirator, when about to be executed; and they still rung in the ears of Buonaparte. It was generally supposed, that his long stay in Paris, ere he again took the field against the allies, was dictated by his fear of some similar explosion to that of Mallet's conspiracy. Whether these two separate classes of the enemies of Buonaparte communicated with each other, we have no opportunity of knowing, but they both had intercourse with the allies. That of Talleyrand's faction was, we believe, maintained at the court of London, through means of a near relation of his own, who visited England shortly before the opening of the campaign of which we treat. We have no doubt, that through some similar medium Talleyrand held communication with the Bourbons; and that, in the same manner as the English Restoration was brought about by a union between the Cavaliers and Presbyterians, there was even then upon foot some treaty of accommodation, by which the exiled monarch was, in regaining the crown, to have the assistance of those, whom, for want of another name, we shall call Constitutionalists, it being understood that his government was to be established on the basis of a free model.

It was of the greatest importance that both these

Digitized by Google

factions should be cautious in their movements, until it should appear what course the Allied Monarchs were about to pursue in the impending negotiation with Buonaparte. The issue of this was the more dubious, as it was generally understood that though the Sovereigns were agreed on the great point of destroying, on the one hand, the supremacy of France, and, on the other, in leaving her in possession of her just weight and influence, they entertained a difference of opinion as to the arrangement of her future government.

The Prince Regent of England, from the generosity of his own disposition, as well as from a clear and comprehensive view of future possibilities, entertained views favourable to the Bourbons. This illustrious person justly conjectured, that free institutions would be more likely to flourish under the restored family, who would receive back their crown under conditions favourable to freedom, than under any modification of the revolutionary system, which must always, in the case of Buonaparte's being permitted to reign, be felt as implying encroachments on his imperial power. The Bourbons, in the case presumed, might be supposed to count their winnings, in circumstances where the tenacious and resentful mind of Napoleon would brood over his losses; and it might be feared, that with a return of fortune he might struggle to repair them. But there were ministers in the British cabinet who were afraid of in-

Digitized by Google

curring the imputation of protracting the war by announcing England's adoption of the cause of the Bourbons, which was now of a date somewhat antiquitated, and to which a sort of unhappy fatality had hitherto been annexed. England's interest in the royal cause was, therefore, limited to good wishes.

The Emperor Alexander shared in the inclination which all sovereigns must have felt towards this unhappy family, whose cause was in some degree that of princes in general. It was understood that Moreau's engagement with the Russian Monarch had been founded upon an express assurance on the part of Alexander, that the Bourbons were to be restored to the Crown of France under the limitations of a free constitution. Prussia, from her close alliance with Russia, and the personal causes of displeasure which existed betwixt Frederick and Napoleon, was certain to vote for the downfall of the latter.

But the numerous armies of Austria, and her vicinity to the scene of action, rendered her aid indispensable to the allies, while the alliance betwixt her Imperial house and this once fortunate soldier, threw much perplexity into their councils. It was believed that the Emperor of Austria would insist upon Buonaparte's being admitted to treat as Sovereign of France, providing the latter gave sufficient evidence that he would renounce his pretensions to general supremacy; or, if he continued unreasona-

Digitized by Google

bly obstinate, that the Emperor Francis would desire that a regency should be established, with Maria Louisa at its head. Either course, if adopted, would have been a death's-blow to the hopes of the exiled family of Bourbon.

Amid this uncertainty, the Princes of the House of Bourbon gallantly determined to risk their own persons in France, and try what their presence might do to awake ancient remembrances at a crisis so interesting.

Although the British ministry refused to afford any direct countenance to the schemes of the Bourbon family, they could not, in ordinary justice, deny the more active members of that unhappy race the freedom of acting as they themselves might judge most for the interest of their cause and adherents. To their applications for permission to depart for France, they received from the British ministry the reply, that the Princes of the House of Bourbon were the guests, not the prisoners, of Britain; and although the present state of public affairs precluded her from expressly authorising any step which they might think proper to take, yet they were free to quit her territories, and return to them at their pleasure. Under a sanction so general, the Duke d'Angouleme set sail for St Jean de Luz, to join the army of the Duke of Wellington; the Duke de Berri for Jersey, to correspond with the Royalists of Brittany; and

Digitized by Google

Monsieur for Holland, from which he gained the frontiers of Switzerland, and entered France in the rear of the Austrian armies. The movements of the two last princes produced no effects of consequence.

The Duke de Berri paused in the Isle of Jersey, on receiving some unpleasant communications from France respecting the strength of the existing government, and on discovering, it is said, a plot to induce him to land at a point, where he must become the prisoner of Buonaparte.

Monsieur entered France, and was received at Vesoul with great enthusiasm. But this movement was not encouraged by the Austrian commandants and generals; and Monsieur's proposal to raise corps of Royalists in Alsace and Franche Compté, was treated with coldness, approaching to contempt. The execution of Gouault at Troyes, and the decree of death against the Royalists, struck terror into the party, which was increased by the retrograde movement of the Grand Army. The enterprize of Monsieur, therefore, had no immediate result, though undoubtedly his presence had a decisive effect in consequence of ultimate events; and the restoration would hardly have taken place, without that prince having so adventured his person.

The arrival of the Duke of Angouleme in the army of the Duke of Wellington, had more immediate consequences. His Royal Highness could

Digitized by Google

only be received as a volunteer, but the effect of his arrival was soon visible. La Rochejacquelein, who had dedicated to the royal cause his days and nights, his fortune and his life, soon appeared in the British camp, urging the general to direct his march on the city of Bourdeaux, which, when delivered from the vicinity of Soult's army, would instantly declare itself for the Bourbons, and be followed by the rising of Guienne, Anjou, and Languedoc. Humanity, as well as policy, induced the Duke of Wellington still to hesitate. He knew how frequently patriotic enthusiasm makes promises beyond its power to fulfil; and he cautioned the zealous envoy to beware of a hasty declaration, since the conferences at Chatillon were still continued, and there was a considerable chance of their ending in a peace between the allies and Napoleon, La Rochejacquelein, undeterred by remonstrances, continued to urge his suit with such intelligence and gallantry, as to receive at last the encouraging answer, "Remain a few days at headquarters, and you shall see us force the Gaves."

Here, accordingly, commenced a series of scientific manœuvres, commencing 14th February, by which the Duke of Wellington, pressing step by step on that part of the French army which were on the left side of the Adour, drove them successively beyond the Gave de Mauleon, and the Gave d'Oleron. On the right side of the latter Gave, the French took a po-

Digitized by Google

sition on very strong ground in front of the town of Orthez, where, joined by Clausel and a strong reinforcement, Soult endeavoured to make a stand. The Duke of Wellington commenced his attack on the enemy's right, storming and taking the village by which it was commanded. The desperate resistance which the enemy made on this point, occasioned one of those critical movements, when a general is called upon, in the heat of battle, to alter all previous arrangements, and, in the moment of doubt, confusion, and anxiety, to substitute new combinations to supersede those which have been planned in the hours of cool premeditation. A left attack upon a chain of heights extending along General Soult's left, was substituted for that to which Wellington had at first trusted for victory.

At the same time, the appearance of General Hill's division, who had forded the river, or Gave, above Orthez, and threatened the enemy's flank and rear, made the defeat complete. For some time Mareschal Soult availed himself of the alertness of his troops, by halting and taking new positions, to preserve at least the form of a regular retreat; but at length, forced from one line to another by the manœuvres of the British, sustaining new losses at every halt, and menaced by the rapid approach of General Hill's division, his retreat became a flight, in which the French suffered great loss. Whole bat-

Digitized by Google

talions of conscripts dispersed entirely, and many left their muskets regularly piled, as if intimating their fixed resolution to retire altogether from the contest.

Another action near Aires, by General Hill, and the passage of the Adour, under Bayonne, by the Honourable Sir John Hope, a manœuvre which might well be compared to a great battle fought, gave fresh influence to the British arms. Bayonne was invested, the road to Bourdeaux laid open, and Soult, left with scarce the semblance of an army, retreated towards Tarbes, to secure a junction with such French corps as might be returning from Spain.

The battle of Orthez, with the brilliant and masterly manœuvres which preceded and followed it, served to establish the superiority of the British forces in points wherein they had till then been deemed most deficient. Since the victories in Spain, it was no longer uncommon to hear a French officer allow, that in the extreme tug of conflict the English soldier, from physical strength and high energy of character, had perhaps some degree of superiority over his own impetuous but less persevering countrymen. But he uniformly qualified such a stretch of candour, by claiming for the French superior skill in contriving, and promptitude in executing, those previous movements, on which the fate of battles usually depends. The victory of Salamanca, though gained over a general distinguished as a tactician, and in

Digitized by Google

consequence of a previous contest of manœuvres, was not admitted to contradict the opinion with which Frenchmen were generally impressed. Yet, since the commencement of the campaign on the Adour, the French army, though under command of the celebrated Soult, (*le Vieux Renard*, as he was familiarly called by his soldiers,) was checked, turned, out-marched, and out-flanked upon every occasion; driven from position to position, in a country that affords so many of peculiar strength, without having it in their power to injure their victors by a protracted defence; and repeatedly defeated, not by main force or superiority of number, but by a combination of movements, at once so boldly conceived and so admirably executed, as left throughout the whole contest the palm of science, as well as of enduring energy and physical hardihood, with the British soldier. These victories, besides adding another laurel to the thick-woven chaplet of the English general, had the most decisive effect on the future events of the war, as well as upon the public mind in the south of France.

Bourdeaux being thus left to follow the inclinations of the inhabitants, and encouraged by the approach of an English detachment of 15,000 men, under Field-Marshal Beresford, poured out its multitudes to receive the Duke of Angouleme. The numbers which thronged out of the city were computed

Digitized by Google

to be at least 10,000 persons. The mayor, Count Lynch, in a short speech, told the English General, that if he approached as a conqueror, he needed not his interposition to possess himself of the keys of Bourdeaux; but if he came as an ally of their lawful sovereign, he was ready to tender them up, with every token of love, honour, and affection. Field-Marshal Beresford reiterated his promises of protection, and expressed his confidence in the loyalty of the city of Bourdeaux. The Mayor then uttered the long-forgotten signal cry of *Vive le Roi!* and it was echoed a thousand times from the thousands around. Count Lynch then, pulling the three-coloured cockade from his hat, assumed the white cockade of the Bourbons. All imitated his example, and at a concerted signal, the old ensign of loyalty streamed from the steeples and towers of the city, amid general acclamation.

The enthusiasm with which the signals of loyalty were adopted, and the shouts of *Vive le Roi* repeated on all hands, mingled with blessings upon the heads of the English and their leaders, formed a scene which those who witnessed it will not speedily forget. It was a renewal of early affections and attachments, which seemed long dead and forgotten,—a general burst of feelings the more generous and affecting, because they were not only as disinterested as spontaneous, but might eventually be deeply

Digitized by Google

fraught with danger to those who expressed them. Yet they were uttered with a generous enthusiasm, that placed the actors far above the apprehension of personal consequences.

The same lively acclamations hailed the entrance of the Duke d'Angouleme into this fine city. At the Prince's entry, the inhabitants crowded round him with enthusiasm. The archbishop and clergy of the diocese recognised him; *Te Deum* was sung in full pomp, while the united banners of France, Britain, Spain, and Portugal, were hoisted on the walls of the town. Lord Dalhousie was left commandant of the British; and if excellent sense, long experience, the most perfect equality of temper, and unshaken steadiness, be necessary qualities in so delicate a trust, the British army had not one more fit for the charge.

Brilliant as these tidings were, they excited in Britain the most cruel apprehensions for the fate which Bourdeaux might incur, if this declaration should unhappily prove to be premature. The treaty at Chatillon seemed to approach a termination, and vessels are said to have been dispatched to the Gironde, to favour the escape of such citizens as might be most obnoxious to the vengeance of Buonaparte Many of those who wished most for British success, were tempted to regret that the victory of Orthez had

Digitized by Google

taken place; so great were their apprehensions for those who had been encouraged by that success, to declare against the government of Napoleon ere his power of injuring them was at an end. That we may see how far those fears were warranted, we shall hastily review the progress of this remarkable negotiation, of which, however, the secret history is not even now entirely known.

The propositions for peace had begun with the communication of the Baron St Aignan, which had been discussed at Frankfort. The terms then proposed to Napoleon were, that, abandoning all his wider conquests, France should retire within the course of the Rhine and the barrier of the Alps. Napoleon had accepted these conditions as a basis, under a stipulation, however, which afforded a pretext for breaking off the treaty at pleasure, namely, that France was to be admitted to liberty of commerce and navigation; an implied challenge of the maritime law, as exercised by the British. To this, the Earl of Aberdeen, the able and accomplished representative of Britain, replied, that France should enjoy such liberty of commerce and navigation as she had any right to expect. A subject of debate, and a most important one, was thus left open; and perhaps neither of those powers were displeased to possess a means of disturbing the progress of the treaty, according to what should prove the events of the war.

Digitized by Google

Caulaincourt, Duke of Vicenza, the minister of foreign affairs, was the representative of Napoleon at Chatillon, upon this most important occasion. His first instructions, dated 4th January, 1814, restricted him to the basis proposed at Frankfort, which assigned Belgium to France, thus conceding to the latter what Napoleon now called her natural boundaries, although it certainly did not appear, why, since victory had extended her frontiers by so many additional kingdoms, defeat should not now have the natural effect of retrenching them. But after the inauspicious commencement of the campaign, by the battle of Brienne, in which Napoleon gained little, and that of La Rothiere, in which he was defeated, he saw that as peace, like the Books of the Sibyls, (to the sale of which the negotiation has been compared,) would rise in price, circumstances might render it necessary, also, that peace should be made by Caulaincourt without communication with Napoleon. Depending upon the events of war, it might be possible that a favourable day, nay, an hour being suffered to elapse, might put the treaty out of his reach. For these reasons, Caulaincourt was intrusted, over and above his instructions, with a definitive and unlimited carte-blanche, in which he was empowered to "bring the negotiation to a happy issue, to save the capital, and prevent the hazards of a battle, on which must rest the last hopes of the nation."

Digitized by Google

Caulaincourt reached Chatillon sur Seine, which had been declared neutral for the purpose of the conferences. At this memorable Congress, Count Stadion represented Austria, Count Razumowski Russia, Baron Humboldt Prussia, and Great Britain had three commissioners present, namely, Lord Aberdeen, Lord Cathcart, and Sir Charles Stewart. Every politeness was shown on the part of the French, who even offered the English ministers the advantage of corresponding directly with London by the way of Calais; a courtesy which was declined with thanks.

The commissioners of the allies were not long in expressing what Napoleon's fears had anticipated. They declared that they would no longer abide by the basis proposed at Frankfort. "To obtain peace, France must be restricted within her ancient limits," which excluded the important acquisition of Belgium. Baron Fain gives us an interesting account of the mode in which Napoleon received this communication. He retired for a time into his own apartment, and sent for Berthier and Maret. They came—he gave them the fatal dispatch—they read, and a deep silence ensued. The two faithful ministers flung themselves at their master's feet, and with tears in their eyes implored him to give way to the necessity of the time. "Never," he replied, "will I break the oath by which I swore at my coronation, to

Digitized by Google

maintain the integrity of the territories of the *Republic*, and never will I leave France less in extent than I found her. It would not only be France that would retreat, but Austria and Prussia who would advance. France indeed needs peace, but such a peace is worse than the most inveterate war. What answer would I have to the Republicans of the State, when they should demand from me the barrier of the Rhine? No—write to Caulaincourt that I reject the treaty, and will rather abide the brunt of battle." Shortly after he is said to have exclaimed, "I am yet nearer to Munich than they are to Paris."

His councillors were not discouraged. In a cooler moment, the ministers who watched his pillow, obtained from him permission that the treaty should proceed. He directed that the articles proposed by the allies should be sent to Paris, and the advice of each privy councillor taken individually upon the subject. With one exception, that of Count Lacuée de Cessac, all the privy councillors agreed that the terms proposed at Chatillon ought to be subscribed to. Thus sanctioned, Caulaincourt, on the 9th of February, wrote to the commissioners of the allies, that if an immediate armistice were entered into, he was ready to consent that France should retreat within her ancient limits, according to the basis proposed. He offered, also, that France should cede instantly, on condition of the armistice being granted

Digitized by Google

some of the strong places, which their acceptance of the terms offered obliged her to yield up. But this offer of ceding the fortresses was clogged with secret conditions, to be afterwards explained. The allies declared their readiness to adhere to these preliminaries, and for a day the war might be considered as ended.

But, in the meantime, the successes which Napoleon obtained over Blucher at Montmirail and Champeaubert, had elevated him in his own opinion above the necessity in which he stood after the battle of Brienne. From the field of battle at Chateau Thiery, he wrote to Caulaincourt to assume an attitude less humiliating among the members of the Congress; and after the defeat of the prince of Wirtemberg, at the bridge of Montereau, and the retreat of the Grand Army from Troyes, he seems to have entirely resolved to break off the treaty.

When Schwartzenberg, as we have seen, demanded the meaning of Napoleon's offensive movement, contrary to what had been agreed upon by the Congress at Chatillon, he answered, by the letter to the Emperor of Austria, in which he rejected the conditions to which Caulincourt had agreed, and reprobated them as terms which, if known in Paris, would excite general indignation. "It would realize," he said, "the dream of Burke, who desired to make France disappear from the map of Europe. It was

Digitized by Google

placing England* in possession of Antwerp and the Low Countries, neither of which he would ever surrender."

In the same spirit, and at the same time, Napoleon wrote from Nangis to Caulaincourt, that "when he had given him carte-blanche, it was for the purpose of saving Paris, and Paris was now saved; it was for avoiding the risk of a battle,—that risk was over, and the battle won; he therefore revoked the extraordinary powers with which his ambassador was invested."

We will not stop to inquire into the diplomatic question, whether Caulaincourt had not effectually exercised, on 9th February, those powers which were not recalled until the 17th, six days after; and, consequently, whether his master was not bound, by the act of his envoy, beyond the power of retracting. Enough remains to surprise us in Napoleon's headstrong resolution to continue the war, when, in fact, it was already ended upon terms which had been recommended by all his councillors, one excepted. His obligation to the Republic of France, to maintain the integrity of its territories, could scarcely remain binding on one, by whom that very Republic had been de-

* This alluded to the match, then supposed to be on the tapis, betwixt the late Princess Charlotte of Wales and the Prince of Orange.

Digitized by Google

stroyed; and at any rate, no such engagement can bind a sovereign from acting in extremity as the safety of the community requires. Far less could the terms be said to dishonour France, or strike her out of the map of Europe, unless her honour and existence, which had flourished for twelve centuries, depended upon an acquisition which she had made within twenty years. But the real case was, that Buonaparte always connected the loss of honour with the surrender of whatever he conceived himself to have a chance of being able to retain. Every cession was to be wrung from him; he would part with nothing willingly; and, like a child with its toys, that of which there was any attempt to deprive him, became immediately the most valuable of his possessions. Antwerp, indeed, had a particular right to be considered as inestimable. The sums he had bestowed on its magnificent basins, and almost impregnable fortifications, were immense. He had always the idea that he might make Antwerp the principal station of a large navy. He clung to this vision of a fleet, even at Elba and Saint Helena, repeating often, that he might have saved his crown if he would have resigned Antwerp at Chatillon; and no idea was more rivetted in his mind, than that his refusal was founded on patriotic principles. Yet the chief value of Antwerp lay in the event of another war with Great Britain, for which Buonaparte was thus preparing, while the

Digitized by Google

question was, how the present hostilities were to be closed; and surely, the possibility of a navy which had no existence, should not have been placed in competition with the safety of a nation deeply emperilled by the war now waging in the very centre of his kingdom.* This he saw in a different light from that of calm reason. "If I am to receive flagellation," he said, "let it be at least under terms of compulsion."

Lastly, the temporary success which he had attained in the field of battle, was of a character which, justly considered, ought not to have encouraged the French Emperor to continue war, but, on the contrary, might have furnished a precious opportunity for making peace, before the very sword's point was at his throat. The conditions which he might have made in this moment of temporary success, would have had the appearance of being gracefully ceded, rather than positively extorted by necessity. And it may be added, that the allies, startled by their losses, would have probably granted him better terms; and certainly, remembering his military talents, would have taken care to observe those which they might fix upon. The reverses, therefore, in the month of February, which obscured the arms of the

* See Journal, &c. par Le Compte de Las Cases, tome IV. partie 7ième.

Digitized by Google

combined monarchs, resembled the clouds, which, in Byron's Tale, is described as passing over the moon, to afford an impenitent renegade the last and limited term for repentence.* But the heart of Napoleon, like that of Alp, was too proud to profit by the interval of delay thus afforded to him.

The truth seems to be, that Buonaparte never seriously intended to make peace at Chatillon; and while his negotiator, Caulaincourt, was instructed to hold out to the allies a proposal to cede the frontier fortresses, he received from the Duke of Bassano the following private directions:—"The Emperor desires that you would avoid explaining yourself clearly upon every thing which may relate to delivering up the fortresses of Antwerp, Mayence, and Alexandria, if you should be obliged to consent to these cessions; his Majesty intending, even though he should have ratified the treaty, to be guided by the military situation of affairs:—wait till the last moment. The bad faith of the allies in respect to the capitulations of Dresden, Dantzic, and Gorcum, authorises us to endeavour not to be duped. Refer, therefore, these questions to a military arrangement, as was done at

* "There is a light cloud by the moon—
'Tis passing, and 'twill pass full soon;
If, by the time its vapoury sail
Hath ceased her shrouded orb to veil,
Thy heart is not within thee changed,
Then God and man are both avenged."
Siege of Corinth.

Digitized by Google

Presburg, Vienna, and Tilsit. His Majesty desires that you would not lose sight of the disposition which he will feel, *not to deliver up those three keys of France*, if military events, on which he is willing still to rely, should permit him not to do so, *even if he should have signed the cession of all these provinces*. In a word, his Majesty wishes to be able, after the treaty, to be guided by existing circumstances, to the last moment. He orders you to burn this letter as soon as you have read it."

The allies showed, on their side, that the obstinacy of Napoleon had increased, not diminished, their determination to carry on the war. A new treaty, called that of Chaumont, was entered into upon the 1st of March, between Austria, Russia, Prussia, and England, by which the high contracting parties bound themselves each to keep up an army of 150,000 men, with an agreement on the part of Great Britain, to advance four millions to carry on the war, which was to be prosecuted without relaxation, until France should be reduced within her ancient limits; and what further indicated the feelings of both parties, the military commissioners, who had met at Lusigny to settle the terms of an armistice, broke up, on pretence of being unable to agree upon a suitable line of demarcation.

The principal negotiation continued to languish at Chatillon, but without much remaining hope be-

Digitized by Google

ing entertained, by those who were well-informed on either side, of the result being favourable.

On the 7th March, Romigny, a clerk of Buonaparte's cabinet, brought to the Emperor, on the evening of the bloody battle of Craonne, the ultimatum of the allies, insisting that the French envoy should either proceed to treat upon the basis they had offered, namely, that France should be reduced within her ancient limits, or that Caulaincourt should present a *contre-projet*. His plenipotentiary requested instructions; but it appears that Buonaparte, too able not to see the result of his pertinacity, yet too haughty to recede from it, had resolved, in sportsman's phrase, to die hard. The 10th day of March having passed over, without any answer arriving from Buonaparte to Caulaincourt, the term assigned to him for declaring his ultimatum, was extended to five days; the plenipotentiary of France hoping, probably, that some decisive event in the field of battle would either induce his master to consent to the terms of the allies, or give him a right to obtain better.

It is said, that, during this interval, Prince Wentzeslaus of Lichtenstein was again dispatched by the Emperor Francis to the head-quarters of Napoleon, as a special envoy, for the purpose of conjuring him to accommodate his ultimatum to the articles settled as the basis of the conferences, and in-

Digitized by Google